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THE

# MOTHER OF JESUS

*IN THE FIRST AGE AND AFTER*

BY

J. HERBERT WILLIAMS

Οὗτοι πάντες ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει, σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ Μαρίᾳ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.—ACTS i. 14

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# PREFACE

THE English people holds perhaps naturally the favour of Heaven. Providence rules the world, and the country is evidently destined to achieve, and has actually achieved, a great work in the order of the Providence that rules the world. What is the future in store for it? Accordingly, no doubt, as it corresponds with the designs of that Supreme Ruler. But at least in the matter of religion, the English people dares not only to expect but to claim the divine favour.[1]

England is in the main without religion, without knowledge of God or of Christ; it has been so any time these 350 years; in the time of Shaftesbury, in the time of Queen Caroline, in our own time. But that is in small degree the fault of the English

Origin of English Protestantism.

[1] The matter was misunderstood by the Tractarians, and by others before and after them, as if it were the Established Church that received at least divine toleration. A closer and more candid scrutiny discovers easily the truth of the facts. Apart from England and the English this Episcopalian Protestantism has no success, and at home the Nonconforming sects are equally or more prosperous.

people. Heresy is the *wilful* choice of error, and the English people are accordingly no heretics. Their religion was plundered and demolished by a banded conspiracy of Machiavels; the people did not reject, no section of them rejected, Christ or Christianity, as could unhappily not be said of other nationalities then or later; they took up arms for their religion, they were masters of the field—and they were cajoled by perjury and the last degree of human depravity.[1] The ministrations of religion were excluded by penal laws, the penalties being hanging and quartering. The press was muzzled. Every vestige of Missal or Catechism was hunted up and destroyed; the printing and publishing of anything Catholic involved fine and imprisonment; the Catholic faith was stamped out by severe and organised repression. After two generations the bulk of the population, the people of England, were, it is true, not Catholic, because they had never heard of any such thing, they had no opportunities of hearing. And then, after all is done, in this nineteenth or

[1] In the Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536, the king had no forces on which he could rely to check the insurgents, and must capitulate. He promised in the most solemn terms the pardon of all concerned and the redress of their grievances, and thereupon the gathering dispersed. Within a fortnight the leaders were all burnt or hanged and the Protestant profanity and pillage proceeded as before. See Green, *History of the English People*, and Bright, *History of England*.

twentieth century, there are poor purblind creatures who rail against the Catholic Church on the score of obscurantism, oppression, persecution; who denounce the Catholic Church in the name of freedom of inquiry, free speech and free writing! God bless my soul! if there had been this freedom observed in the past, England would be Catholic to-day. Or at least you cannot deny it, you who dragooned her into free-thought, forsooth; into unbelief, unbelief in God and Church attendance left to hypocrites and women![1] 'Moi,' exclaims a French country cobbler in our day, with enthusiasm, to the English tourist, 'moi, je suis Protestant aussi; je ne crois à rien!'

Its character.

Yes, Christianity in England is mostly dead and forgotten. The notion of a Revelation is lost. Forgotten all the old beliefs, the old devotions, like the fashions of a century ago, like the roses of the bygone year. What is to be done? The fortunate and favoured isles reduced to such a pass! How is the Gospel to be preached at the end of the second millennium in favoured England? Obviously the forgotten

[1] It must be allowed that revivals have occurred, of emotional religious sentiment, as, *e.g.*, in Methodism. But the influence does not strike deep and is evanescent. What percentage of the adult male population regularly attends upon public worship from a sense of religious duty? A very small one.

must be recalled, if it may be. But the difficulty is that in place of the forgotten realities there are false Duessas now everywhere appearing.

'Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint beside the image set;
The enchanted damzell vanisht into nought,
Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought
But th' emptie girdle which about her wast was wrought.'

There are people who achieve a reputation, amid a little circle—or in parabola—as having read, no more than at second hand, some foolish German stuff, and as having thereupon even written a book upon the God of Genesis or the Genesis of God. How prophesy amid these 'daubers with untempered mortar'? St. Paul might reason of justice and judgment to come till Felix trembled, but the English mechanic and the English man of culture alike take no heed; they have heard it all before. St. Peter might preach the Resurrection of the crucified Nazarene, and his hearers thereupon be pricked at the heart, and ask, 'What shall we do?' But in our day they ask instead—whether Balaam's ass could speak! Instead of the Christianity of Revelation we have the Protestant caricature, and that is what the intelligence of the hearer holds, what he conceives to be the

thing spoken of, when one would preach to him the Gospel.

It is always a *malentendu*. Conversion—real conversion, to the faith of Christ—appears a happy chance and nothing more. Confessedly nothing more in the opinion of the great English Oratorian.[1] How turn the world of England upside down to-day, as was turned the Roman world by the first Christian missionaries? What appears to be wanted, what seems to offer at least some possible prospect, is recalling some one of those forgotten things that is wholly forgotten, of which there remains no semblance or counterfeit at all. Just as one might restore a true philosophy, not by discussing cause and effect, or the nature of the syllogism, or the mentality of nerve ganglia, but by exhibiting again the Realism of a former age. Or as one might revolutionise political science by starting with the Decalogue.

England, Christian England, Catholic England, was distinguished in Christendom by her devotion

[1] The *motif* of Newman's *Grammar of Assent* appears to be his perception that religious profession in his own country does not rest upon, and is not in any degree proportionate to, reason or argument, or 'inference,' as he names it (see in especial ch. iv. § 3). He attempts to justify or account for this as according to the fundamental character of the human mind. The theory is one of philosophic scepticism, and admits the familiar reply, *ad hominem*, that if argument does not produce conviction, what is the use of Newman's arguing for that theory? I say 'a happy chance,' of course, apart from the considerations of piety.

to the Mother of God. The island was called by the name of Mary's Dowry. The shrine of our Lady of Walsingham was celebrated on an equality with any other anywhere in Europe. The Blessed Virgin has no place in the fictitious Christianity of modern England. It is not that there is a false idea of her. She does not occur at all. The Mass is transmuted in the Communion Service, Good Friday is a general holiday; but our Lady is exiled, from devotion, from thought, from everything. If we could bring back Mary, we should bring back all the rest. And the Virgin's honour is a virgin theme. No counter theory, no false image, a blank possibly to fill up, but a blank undeniably.

Exclusion of the Blessed Virgin.

Under the circumstances it will not be wise in any such enterprise to show *complaisance*, to make the most of the rags and tatters of Christianity that survive, to give a moderate account, to leave unsaid what might offend prejudice, to make things easy and acceptable, so that the exhibition of the Catholic faith may approve itself as reasonable and just. This would be confuting the Protestant creed, while confirming the Protestant temper. But the guilt of heresy, the poison of heresy, resides in the temper.

Things to be avoided; accommodation.

The Revelation has not to approve itself. That there has been a Revelation made, judge

you of that; judge of it by the historical fact, by the historical outcome, by 'the superexcellence of the power' (2 Cor. iv. 7), by the light that enlightens every soul of man. But of the Revelation you may not judge. The Revelation is a Revelation, of the things of God, of things beyond your knowledge; you can only listen and learn. To make the Catholic faith approvable to human reason, is to overthrow the Protestant by Protestantism, *Deum per mendacium glorificare.*[1] It is the wrong way, and has no promise of blessing or success.

The converts secured are callow. They have not become Catholics, they are but Protestants who judge the Church to be right. The thin ears will devour the good ears (Gen. xli. 24). The callow convert levels down the general attainment in the Catholic faith, and that is already lowered, at least in utterance, to mollify the callow convert and make him feel at home. After some years the Catholicity of the country is sensibly impaired. It is a foolish policy to bring strangers in at the cost of turning the family out.

If thus accommodation is excluded, there is nothing apposite in argument. The opponent does not argue. He makes assertions, unqualified assertions, outrageous assertions sometimes, to the discredit of the Church; Argument.

[1] 'To glorify God by a lie.'

he offers no proof of them. He is to be met by counter-assertions, as unqualified and as definite, and let these be weighed against those. To argue is weakness. The Church originally holds possession, and it is for the Protestant to make good his protest. It is not the Church's proofs but the Protestant's disproofs that are required. When the Protestant gives his reasons, it will be time enough to show their unreason.

Moreover the fundamental articles of the Christian creed, and it is upon these that all serious controversy turns, do not want proof. If you accept Scripture, they are there; if you appeal to tradition, the earliest historical references to Christian institution reveal something at any rate that is not Protestantism. Let anyone, *e.g.*, read the account of the celebration of Mass given by St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315–386). If you will have neither Scripture nor tradition, we must wish you good morning. There is nothing to argue about or for which to offer proof. You might as well require one to give reasons to show that St. Paul's Cathedral stands on Ludgate Hill.

It follows equally that erudition is thrown away—quotations from ancient doctors or from the schools or from ecclesiastical instruments of various sorts and kinds. I am doubtful about more than a select few among

Erudition.

Catholics reading anything in that style, and I am sure that the modern Protestant does not care two straws about the usual authorities, which are all, whatever their date, Romish and benighted. Primitive Christianity, the fourth or fifth century, is nothing to the modern Protestant; he begins with the fifteenth, or he begins just with himself. Even the 'Ritualist' of the Established Protestantism does not trouble about 'the Fathers,' as his forbears did. The 'Sarum use' is dropped, has long been. What he is copying is the actual Catholic Church, what he calls 'the Italian mission,' in his neighbourhood. Why waste time and space over the collation of authorities testifying to the elementary doctrines of Christianity? No one disputes that there are such authorities to be found and that they do so testify. It is absolute *ignoratio elenchi*—a bad fault in argument.

Besides the collation of authorities, there is another species of erudition which I cannot help thinking to be better away; a kind of accepted mannerism it is in religious exposition, on the plea that the things dealt with are not simple incidents, words and actions as they occur, but are mysteries, and must not be so much as named without adding their proper halo. For example, let the subject be the Purification of our Lady (Candlemas Day),

Mysticism.

and we are to behold an anticipation of Calvary and Mary offering up her Son, as Abraham offered up Isaac. Or we are invited to make the words *dies purgationis ejus* [1] the occasion of a meditation after the manner of the Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. It is all quite right and beautiful, merely out of place. For the Protestant any such admixture makes Chinese of everything. And again I should not feel extremely sure of the Catholic being interested.

The modern reader is what he is. One has a simple elementary article of the faith—one would not wisely go beyond that in the present age—to exhibit and expound, and must not drop it for a moment; step by step its significance must be developed, without allowing the reader to leave the subject or miss the connection of each succeeding portion with that which preceded.

An elementary article of the faith is as such necessarily integral. Erudition and argument are not required, and accommodation would be mischievous, but there is still a design to be followed. The reasonable, the actual, the necessary inclusion of the particular article within the four corners of the Revelation should be made out. This, in the first place on literary obligation; but also on that of controversial exigence. Being

Integration to be made only with the *depositum fidei*.

[1] 'The days of her purification.' Luke ii. 22.

integral, the article is accepted along with the creed, and if rejected, the creed must also go. That is the controversial issue, which should plainly appear.

I am unable to agree with a very different conception and policy which has been sometimes proposed. For example, it was laid down, and on very high authority, that English Catholics should take no step to aid the abrogation of the Protestant Establishment, because there are no existing resources by which the Church could provide for the religious care of those who would thus be left destitute. But supposing provision was made for whatever percentage? The glory of God is promoted and the salvation of so many souls advanced. And will anyone tell me how those unprovided for suffer loss? Or is it really meant that they were in the way of salvation under Protestant teaching?

No human respect (James ii. 1-4).

It is said that Protestants, as being duly baptised, belong to 'the soul of the Church,' and that we should not disturb their imperfect belief at the risk of driving them into further negation. The same argument applies. They are materially Christians, but not formally; they do not 'believe the Gospel' (Mark i. 15).[1] For the

[1] At least in this passage 'the Gospel' is not any written

Gospel is a Revelation, and the religion of the Protestant is what he believes to be true; he is not 'taught of God' (John vi. 45). The God of human opinion is not the God of Christianity; Brahma or Ormazd has no worse credentials. And is the Protestant a Christian even materially? Is the matter and form of the Sacrament observed, and what is to be said regarding intention? There is a simple test to apply. How often would a priest take the responsibility of receiving a Protestant into the Church without baptism, and if he threw the responsibility on to his catechumen, would the catechumen generally elect to stand by the validity of the Protestant administration? The speech about 'the soul of the Church' is therefore unsound and—*flens dico*—may be not unfrequently insincere. It does not mean charity, but has another motive. And the proof is that the charitable suggestion takes account of the Established religion alone and not of other forms of Protestantism in the country. The repudiation of sympathy with Disestablishment has certainly to appearance the same signification. Meanwhile this so-called Church of England, will anyone show how its position in any ecclesiastical or theological aspect differs from that of the

life of our Saviour. Why should it elsewhere express a Biblical Christianity?

Church of the Donatists in ancient times which St. Augustine denounced, and the inexpugnable parallel led to the defection of the logical mind of Newman? Or if there is a difference, it is not in favour of the English separation.[1]

Thus I propose to discover the office and dignity of our Lady to exist in the first age and to form an integral portion of the Apostolic tradition, and I shall hope to vindicate the entire existing devotion and belief as the explication of what is unavoidably implicit in the Revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I cannot spoil my workmanship, such as it may be, out of kindness for the self-imposed beliefs of Protestants and

[1] The Jesuit (?) apologetic—*e.g.*, Rev. F. M. de Zulueta, S.J., in *The Weekly Catholic* of Nov. 10, 1905—urges that a sincere Protestant is a virtual Catholic. For the Protestant intends to believe in the religion or Church of Christ, and that is in fact the Catholic Church, so that he is virtually adhering to the faith and communion of the See of Rome. The apologetic should, however, be extended to the sincere pagan of the first Christian centuries, who similarly intended to believe in God, and there is in fact no God but the God of the Christians, so that he virtually confessed the Christian creed, while still throwing his co-religionists to the lions. And then people might object that both the modern Protestant and the Fourth Century pagan had Christianity plainly put before them, existing in their midst, and deliberately or thoughtlessly rejected it through obtuseness or prejudice, or whatever disqualification mental or moral; that the Protestant or the pagan believed in Christ or in God, but in their own imagination of either, not in the Christ and God *revealed*; that this belief is no more *faith*, as theological virtue and divine gift, than is believing in the Kneipp cure.

through fear of unsettling them. Incidentally it belongs to my design, on the contrary, to unsettle them. Nor have I any temptation to go out of my way to conciliate anyone or to avoid giving offence. The friends whom I care to retain are possessed of ordinary intelligence.

By elementary I mean what belongs to the first and necessary outline of the Revelation—

Elementary doctrine.

*elementa exordii sermonum Dei* (Hebr. v. 12).[1] Sublime truths, and revealed from above, mysteries beyond our intelligence to invent or discover. But undeniably the ABC of Christian instruction. The things, it may be objected, have been said before, everyone knows them, and their detailed iteration in this year of grace is merely tedious. I reply, first, that I am by no means so sure that everybody knows them, or at any rate that those know them with whom I am mainly concerned, grown-up men, educated men, notwithstanding. Controversy, I am persuaded, often goes astray through not beginning at an earlier stage, and we ought not to take for granted that what is commonplace to ourselves must be equally ready knowledge to some other, whether Protestant or Catholic. Besides, to assume a certain acquaintance and to pass over the initial facts, is a defect of historical style. I found an educated and fervid

[1] 'The first elements of the words of God.'

Protestant to be greatly surprised, and interested, when I showed him that our Lady was recorded 'in Matthew' to be St. Joseph's wife only in name!

Secondly, though the things have been said before—and I should imagine that there was nothing in my pages that had not—yet I submit there is a difference when they are presented in their connection, in their totality, and this still remained to be done for English readers. I confidently expect the most critical to allow that there is a difference. The facts were familiar, but the meaning they bear appears as something hardly realised before. The meaning was missed, though the facts were there, so long as the facts were without their connection. But if I am to get the total effect, I must have all in; I cannot leave this or that out because it is familiar, and be content with a selection.

Another point. Abjuring erudition, I may be charged with that very fault, though I think it is a different thing, because I have made, especially in the first Part, somewhat copious references to Holy Scripture. Catholics, moreover, are not, I think, very fond of such references, through vexation at the Protestant hap-hazard use of them, and as being conscious of possessing another warrant for the faith they hold themselves. Nevertheless Holy Scripture

Scripture references.

is testimony, and Catholic theologians without exception appeal to it. I have employed Holy Scripture rather for its literary and historical value in evidence than on the ground of its inherent authority as the inspired oracles of God. The reason for this limitation will be readily perceived, and the difference of employment may serve to condone my fault with those who would have wished for less of such reference.

May I be allowed to say something more? I have refused to set about this work for many years, and the only semblance of qualification I have been able to discover in myself is a rather ready familiarity with the text of the New Testament, which is indeed possessed by others besides me, but not by the generality in the same sense or degree, a familiarity in my own case due to fortuitous circumstances. Thus the references I give are my own; even if they may have been employed before by others, they are still original in my use, I have not got them from others. The references are not merely corroborative and supplying a parallel Scripture expression for the particular passages of my text—where they would be merely this, I leave them out—but they are additions to my argument, and even frequently form the climax of it. The argument is only complete with the reference, and I pledge myself that in every case the passage of Scripture is well

worth the reader's looking up, if I can find anyone to give my exposition a serious study. But it would have increased the bulk of my volume unduly to have quoted every passage at length as in a Papal Encyclical, and quotations, however apposite and essential to the argument, certainly do interrupt.

There is nothing that I have written for which I could not, but for considerations of expediency as above explained, have adduced authority enough. I have no occasion to use the common expression of a Catholic writer, that I write in submission to the judgment of the Church. The things I have written are all things that the Church has already judged, simple matters also (except for one chapter) which every instructed Catholic believes and of which no one will dispute the statement. I exhibit the plain Catholic belief and opinion for the sake of Protestants and others who do not know what these are. Let them be plainly and fully informed. The Catholic account.

I ought to explain the use I have made of the term 'Protestant.' I am quite aware that Protestantism as a maimed and perverted edition of the Christian creed belongs to the past, and anyone would show himself behind the times who should set out seriously to-day to refute that archaic religious An apology.

system. For example, the belief in the infallibility of Scripture is gone, that in the Divinity of our Saviour likewise; in fact, pretty well everything dogmatic is gone, and this is now generally expressed with some unction as the aim in view. The assertion of dogma anywhere is suspected, not without truth, as a step in the direction of Rome. Protestant has become in general acceptation a generic name, embracing a thousand diversities; *quot homines tot Christi*;[1] the thing is intangible, elusive, Protean; there is nothing to proceed upon in argument, nothing more, that is to say, than is found with the Deist or the Agnostic. But I want a generic name. I do not understand Protestantism to have any positive character, I do not make that mistake. I mean by Protestant everything that has subsequently issued out of the rebellion of the fifteenth century, the rebellion of Luther and Calvin. All the free-thought and unbelief in England, or with microscopic exception, has come out of the ranks of professing Protestants, and I do not distinguish the variety of species. Hence I may at one time refer to the 'High-Churchman' of the Establishment or to the Salvation Army private, at another to the ultra-Agnostic or the would-be exterminator of any and every creed. But I want a generic name. And on the whole

[1] 'As many Christs as there are many men.'

Protestant seemed the best. For it would not be understood that spurious forms of Christianity were included, though in reality they would be, if I had spoken of infidel or non-Christian instead. I had to choose between offending free-thinkers by classifying them with the pretending Christian sects, or offending the sects by classifying them with free-thinkers. Equally full of animosity both may be, but the free-thinker would be better able to appreciate a literary apology.

J. HERBERT WILLIAMS.

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# PART I

## IN THE FIRST AGE

# CHAPTER I

## EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

THE quadrifid Gospel history of the Ministry of our Lord is fairly substantiated as authentic and genuine. If the narratives were not written by the disciples whose names they commonly bear, they belong at latest to the sub-Apostolic age, and they represent the current traditions of the beginnings of Christianity. For centuries, indeed, the Gospels were acknowledged to be the writings of the four Evangelists, and no question was raised about it. A certain weight must be allowed by the most sceptical, even if it be only a trifling weight, to this constant tradition of centuries. But the fashion of destructive criticism which belonged to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made a change. Holy Scripture was as unpopular as hereditary monarchy or aristocratic privilege.

Date and authority of the Gospels.

Only a few years ago it still needed courage on the part of an apologist to make a positive assertion about authorship, or even date, of the Gospels.

The beginning of the sceptical prevalence is not difficult to trace. The doubts cast upon the origin of the records of our Lord's life issue out of the general dogmatic degradation of German Protestantism within the last 200 years. The degradation—which some would term elevation instead—is a very natural result of disturbance of the established order, whether religious or civil. Each original thinker finds his ambition in further cavil—*saepe trans finem iaculo nobilis expedito*;[1] the more extreme, the higher purity; in the phrase of Carlyle, 'the revolution devours itself.' The orthodox Protestantism shaded off into a dogmatic indifference or dissatisfaction that left little unassailed. Thereupon the authenticity of the Evangelical history appeared to be a vulnerable point, as the writings belonged to a pre-historic age, pre-historic, that is to say, in Christian ecclesiastical record, and there would be no proofs to hand. Moreover, it would inflict a deadly blow upon Christianity if its credentials could thus be proved unsound, and the actuating and antecedent motive of those who started the

[1] 'Famed for throw of spear beyond the limit.' Hor. *Carm.* I. viii. 12.

idea, before they started it, and directing their selection of this or that idea to start, was an unreasoning antipathy to Christianity and a desire to deal it the deadliest blow they could.

The objective of the assault once determined, there was plenty of strength to employ; but one might have doubted the tactical wisdom of the way in which the attack was developed. The critics were unreasonably severe and niggling. Allusions in ancient writings, which an ordinary man would not have thought twice about, even apparent, glaringly apparent, quotations from our Gospels, as, *e.g.*, in Justin Martyr[1] (A.D. 137–167), were set on one side, were not allowed to be produced. They need not be, they were not, allusions to the record of the Evangelist or quotations from it, but belonged to some common source (which no one could produce or attempted to identify), the common source to which both the Evangelist and his apparent transcriber were indebted. The explanation was far-fetched and *ad hoc*, if anything ever was; but, the doubt once started, it was allowed to pass, it held. The venture was intended to have important and far-reaching results. The strength of the attacking position always lay in this, that proof of an ancient writing and of an ancient tradition must in the main be constructive proof. Constructive

[1] *Dial.* 49, p. 146 *c*; *Apol.* i. pp. 62 *c*, and 80 *c*.

proof, therefore, should at once be ruled out. The assault met with considerable and widely diffused success. The critics had all the talking, and no one else was allowed to say a word. The ordinary man doubtless did not study the arguments of the critics, but he heard of their conclusions, and he heard of nothing else. What was the use, said the ordinary man, of arguing from Scripture, when we could not know whether the words ascribed to our Lord were anything but the conjectural suitabilities of centuries after His time? Bring the documents into court; but the first step will be that the documents should be authenticated. The documents cannot be authenticated. The case of Christianity is not such as we had believed, and all our regret will not alter the fact. 'Christianity, shorn of some fictions of superstition and some ecclesiastical accretions, was a noble and sublime presentation of God and of our relation to the Supreme Majesty. But what we know as Christianity has no necessary relation to any actual events; it is not the revelation of Christ, but the invention of hundreds of years after Him. Christianity is all too hazy for a sensible mind to trouble over; so much guess-work, so much bibliological and exegetical technicality in the first stages of it, that one must be content to hold dogma altogether at a distance; submitting to be

outwardly a Christian of one or other sect, while having one's own thoughts about the thing.' With the insidious and covert action of every evil influence, the mischief grew and spread. Christianity ceased to be a real and living faith, not only among educated people, but among large numbers of the population who had heard of the current notions. To the poor the Gospel was preached, and by the poor the Gospel was now let alone. The Church had gone by the wall long ago, and in due time the Bible went as well.

But the very concentration of the sceptical assault led with time to its triumphant repulse, however unlikely and beyond need of serious consideration any such event had at first appeared. The energies, the studies, the researches of apologists were withdrawn from other positions and adversatively concentrated on the defensive side. Success was assisted by archæological discoveries, which, perhaps, were not altogether gifts of fortune, but connected with that concentration. Thus the Gospel attributed to St. John had been thought the most certainly discredited of the four. But the Diatessaron of Tatian (*circa* A.D. 160) begins with the first verses of St. John's Gospel. The Diatessaron is a 'Harmony' of the Gospels, and such a compilation presumes the existence of the originals in familiar use and cognizance for a considerable time before.

The date of composition, then, of the four Gospels, of the last written of the four, is brought within the penumbra of the first age, and the authorship is hardly any longer worth disputing for the critic, as neither perhaps for the apologist worth asserting. When it was denied that the Gospel of St. Mark was written by St. Mark, the implication was that it had been written long after him. If it is proved to belong to the first century, the negative loses its application. The Gospel narratives represent the Apostolic tradition; they record what was taught and accepted in the earliest ages of Christianity; they express the primitive opinion and belief, the aspect of the Incarnation and Ministry of the Son of God current among those who had been in association with His disciples.

They are an authentic record, our earliest record, of what Christianity is. The record may not be complete—it would be unlikely that it should be; and it makes no claim or profession of being complete; it may even be inexplicit, misleading, and, saving the Divine Inspiration, erroneous. But for all that it is a record. *Prima facie*, what it states must stand. It is our chief documentary evidence; in some sense, our only record. In arguing any point of belief or practice with reference to primitive Christianity, it would be utterly paradoxical to leave the

Gospels out of account; it is natural to start with them. There may be other evidence. Our present Christianity comes from the tradition of the Apostolic teaching as orally delivered and independently of any written record, and the evidence for the validity of any belief or practice is primarily that the belief or practice is found existing. The Church of the third or fourth century would be the outcome of the original tradition, and the testimony of early writings to what was in use at their date must carry authority. But the earliest writing, and therefore the chief witness, to the Apostolic tradition is the Gospel narrative. The faith rests on Tradition, but it rests on Scripture as well; each of the two supplements and confirms the other.

Insignificance of the B.V.M. in the Gospels according to Protestants.

There is very little reference made to the Blessed Virgin in the very earliest Christian writings, unless we can hold the works of St. Ephrem the Syrian to be genuine throughout, and not to have been interpolated in a later age (while the principal or sole ground of suspicion would be just precisely the inclusion of devotional expressions and attributions which anticipate, and perhaps exceed, the language of any subsequent expositor of the glories of Mary; it is really a *petitio principii*, even if it should turn out a true surmise). The earliest Christian writings other-

wise that remain to us have nothing quite of this kind.[1] There are those who find a similar difference in the New Testament, inasmuch as our Lady occupies no prominence in the Gospel narratives. However, if these narratives are now thus established as of pretty nearly the date that tradition assigns to them, and as of corresponding authenticity and authority, it must certainly be germane to discover what precisely is the account they give of our Lord's Mother. It may not amount to much, but it is at any rate very solid ground, which criticism will find now difficult to disturb, and which is accepted by all whose Christian faith is based upon the evidence of Holy Scripture. Moreover, if the narratives are of that early date, we may accept their account as representing the tradition and belief then current, so that we are enlightened regarding devotion to the Blessed Virgin, whether it existed or was wholly absent, or to what extent it was carried, in Primitive Christianity.

There is, then, very little reference made to the Blessed Virgin in any one of the Gospels, or in fact in any portion of the New Testament. It is commonly said by Protestants that she appears only twice in the Ministry of our Lord—at the marriage of Cana (John ii. 1–11), and again

[1] But St. Epiphanius (A.D. 367) is conclusive and clear. (See below, p. 64 *note*.)

at Capharnaum, when 'His mother and His brethren' sought to speak with Him (Matt. xii. 46–*fin*, etc.), and on both occasions only to meet with rebuff. The Protestant account is not quite accurate (there are other occasions), and the interpretation of the narrative is unintelligent; but, broadly, and on the whole, this account depicts the effect of the Gospel record, and the force of the argument is not met by particular exceptions and corrections that could be made. Let anyone reflect upon the position assigned to our Lady in the existing Church, as sole or palmary Channel of Grace, as Immaculate, as Queen of angels and of men, as Gate of Heaven—and he is possibly struck with surprise that in our Lord's Ministry she should have apparently so little share, that no Gospel writer should have apparently any notion of the attitude, *e.g.*, of St. Theresa: 'I never can think of them [of our Lord and His Mother] apart,' that the Evangelists should all of them, speaking in general terms, leave her out of the narrative. No better illustration can be found of the failure of the Gospel than the fact that, on the Feast of the Assumption of our Lady, the Church has been driven to select for the proper Gospel of the Feast a passage which has no reference to her whatever, except for the name of Mary occurring in it.

The case is not altered, but immensely

strengthened, when we pass on to consider the other writings embraced in the New Testament. The veneration of our Lady, the doctrine regarding our Lady, seems to be wholly unknown to any Apostolic writer. If it existed in that age, it may well be thought beyond all bounds of probability that St. Paul should leave it out, St. Paul who, in one Epistle or another, not only elaborates an extensive system of Christian doctrine, but who has occasion to allude to the routine of ecclesiastical procedure and practice, over a considerable area, to the Orders of the Ministry, the various spiritual gifts, the status of widows and of virgins, the behaviour and position of women generally in the Church. How is it that he can help reminding his converts, if he believed it himself, that our Lord was born of an immaculate virgin? Whereas his phrase is merely 'born of a woman' (Gal. iv. 4). The death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, are themes for him; but the birth of Christ, except that once, he leaves out altogether. Nor does any other one of the Epistolary writers anywhere allude to it. How is it that St. Paul does not say to the widow and the virgin that their model should be found in her who was both in one? The name of Mary nowhere occurs in the rest of the New Testament; after the first chapter of the Acts, there is no mention at all of our Lord's Mother. The

earliest expositors of the glories of Mary, when they would find for them some foundation in Scripture, had nothing better than the obscure allusion of the Apocalypse (xii. 1) to the 'woman clothed with the sun,' which might be considered, and was alternatively so interpreted, to refer to our Mother the Church and not to our Mother Mary. 'Jerusalem which is above,' exclaims St. Paul (Gal. iv. 26), 'is free, which is our mother.' He appears to have no knowledge of the Mother of Christendom!

Perhaps the Protestant case might be given more powerfully, as it often is more coarsely, than here. But there is no intention of burking it. Let the reader supply for himself anything whatever else of which he has cognizance, to make the indictment the strongest that may be. Here is only a *coup d'œil*—nothing more intended, and space not admitting more—but a *coup d'œil* which should give the effect of the whole, easily seized and possibly quite as urgent as detailed description. Let the apparent failure of the New Testament to correspond with the mind and practice of the Church subsequently in our Lady's regard, stand prominently forward, nothing extenuated, no urgence missed. We have the Gospels, according to the preceding evaluation of their authority as recognised at length in our time, constituting sure ground, constituting our

earliest and palmary written record. We have the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the allusions of Epistolary writers as further evidence of the received opinion and belief of the earliest Christian age. Is it possible within the covers of the New Testament to find any rebutting evidence against the *prima facie* appearance that has been described—any evidence, however small or scanty, of our Lady occupying at all the position in the Apostolic Church which she held in that of the sixth or thirteenth or nineteenth centuries? That is the enterprise in hand. Let the Protestant take his look round, and give his judgment at the outset, whether the attempt seems to his apprehension likely to issue in mere jugglery and legerdemain, or in the thinnest of literary identification. Perhaps there may be others besides Protestants who are inclined to shake their heads, who would recommend reliance rather on the doctrine of Development, on the determination otherwise reached of the Church having the truth with her, and thus on the later testimony of established Doctors, a Cyril, a Jerome, a Bernard of Clairvaux, on the existing outcome of Christian doctrine. Still it is hoped to carry the acquiescence of all such cavillers or doubters along with the succeeding argument, in most, if not in all, of its successive steps. For evidence may be overlooked, and the effect

of evidence fail to be appreciated, without careful study and reflection. Somewhere, the other day, was quoted: 'A violet *beneath* a mossy stone.' It is as easy to read amiss as to recollect amiss. We read what we think is there, not what the writer put there. We read Holy Scripture very little as literature, for its historical sense and connected meaning. 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' (Acts viii. 30).

## CHAPTER II

### THE RECORD OF THE NATIVITY

BEFORE making particular search in the New Testament for indication of the same honour that is now allowed to the Mother of our Lord, one might reflect whether reason could be assigned for any omission, and what sort of veneration one expected to find. The veneration and invocation of Saints are generally absent from the New Testament. They were things of later development, and originated, as is well known, in the commemoration of martyrs and preservation of their relics.[1] In the first age there was, indeed, the beginning (Matt. xiv. 12; Acts viii. 2), but there could be no more; and a ritual order requires time in which to be formed and to take its mould. A further consideration arises. There is no doubt that SS. Peter and Paul are set before us as extraordinary personages, such as we call, and as were even then called, Saints (Acts xii. 1–9;

Omissions in the New Testament.

[1] See Cyprian *Ep.* 34, and Eusebius, *Præpar. Evang.* l. xiii. c. 11.

xxvii. 23–26, etc.), and their aid was not seldom invoked (viii. 24 ; xx. 10, etc.). But SS. Peter and Paul were still alive at the date of the record, so that their veneration and invocation after death, whether fitting or not, is necessarily left without decisive reference. There is something here which may reasonably modify our expectations regarding devotion to our Lady also in the Apostolic age. The roll of the saints has scarcely yet begun, and there can be expected no such general practice of devotion and no such determinate belief as that to which we are accustomed. Because there are no commemorations in the Mass, and no invocations in prayer, so neither is the Mother of God invoked or commemorated.

And yet the case of the Blessed Virgin is hardly covered by that of any lesser personage, and ritual immaturity will not account for all. The Queen of Saints should receive some superior recognition without waiting for her assumption into heaven ; she should be paid a peculiar homage by the early disciples, by the Apostolic Church. And this should appear in the record ; in the history of the Acts of Apostles, in the writings of Apostles, there should be read something of her who was their head—*Regina Apostolorum.*

Or, again, omission, no doubt, is not to be taken as equivalent to rejection. If Mary's name

is absent, there are other blanks to fill up no less inexplicable. For example, the doctrine of Purgatory and the Sacrament of Penance obtain no direct mention. The *Sacrifice* of the Mass belongs exclusively to St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 7), or possibly to the Apocalypse (v. 6); it is presumed in the Gospels in the institution of the Eucharist, but not, perhaps, directly expressed,[1] and it is nowhere else affirmed or explained in our Lord's recorded discourse. There are several other things belonging to faith or religious observance which obtain only an occasional reference, or are recognised by inference alone; as the celibacy of the clergy, the religious state, the baptism of infants, the use of chrism, etc. The Protestant will no doubt say that all these omissions stand on the same ground with that of the dignity and office of the Blessed Virgin, being the whole of them additional to the first institution, and unmentioned by Apostles and Evangelists because unknown to them. In the first place, however, the point argued is no more than that they do rest on the same ground. It is not only for the one but for the others that we should have to account. Either all are to be rejected as not belonging to Christianity, or we must admit, if any of them do so belong, that the witness of

[1] Some writers endeavour to give a sacrificial sense to the employment of ποιεῖν and ἀνάμνησις, but it is somewhat forced.

Scripture is meagre or incomplete in those particular instances.

It must be recollected also that some among Protestants would extend the omissions or ambiguities still further. The doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity is recognised only by inference. If the word 'Transubstantiation' is not found in Scripture, neither is 'Homöousios,' which, being Greek, would seem to have a better chance of inclusion. Because our Lord promises that the Father will send the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 26), and also that He will Himself send the Paraclete, who is the same as the Holy Ghost (xvi. 7), it is a very wide leap to consider it declared that the Holy Ghost in His essential Being 'proceeds from the Father and the Son.' It is not only the subsidiary articles—if such they may be called—of the Christian faith whose omission or scanty mention we may find disturbing. 'The dignity of the Blessed Virgin does not belong to the New Testament, not clearly, not in the fulness of the modern assertion. It is not the primitive Christianity; it must be scored out.' Shall we, then, also score out the several articles of the Nicene Creed for the same insufficiency?

No; there are certainly these two canons. The observance of the Apostolic age cannot be, is precluded from being, the same in every

particular as the later devotion; the later devotion is not therefore condemned for the earlier lack of it. Also the devotion, in its simple primitive shape, may be existent in the Apostolic age, and need not therefore find mention in Holy Scripture; on the contrary, it is the style of Holy Scripture to omit such things. We should be content with suggestion, with constructive evidence, with slight and incidental allusion. It is not only in regard to the dignity of our Lady that this necessity occurs.

But our Lady is 'Mother of God' in the Incarnation.

At the same time that the absence of the Blessed Virgin's personality, whether from Gospel or Epistle, supposing there is such absence, and to the extent of such absence, would be particularly unexpected and surprising. But in fact the attributes and the place in Redemption which the Church assigns to her, are no less assigned in the record, and it is untrue that the Gospels make such total omission of reference as is supposed. We should observe what and where precisely the omission is. It is in the record of our Lord's Ministry, or it is in the extant writings of Apostles.

But, to begin with, the Birth of our Lord is recorded by two Evangelists with some fulness, and it cannot be denied that the personality of His Mother Mary is very prominent indeed

in this portion of the narrative. St. Matthew describes the Child that was born of her, without any qualification or limitative phrase, as being God—'Immanu-El, God-with-us.' The Child had no human father! Nor was this all. The place of the human father is asserted with the same categorical directness to have been taken by the Holy Ghost—'that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost.' The Evangelist gives these stupendous particulars, not as initiating a fresh view, without any special accent or introduction, as recording merely the received account, the current tradition, the general understanding of the Church of that early age. The age is that of the Apostles or immediately succeeding it. The representation is that of the Apostolic teaching, lifted intact out of the year of the first Christian Pentecost into whatever year—recent, observe, and not to be postponed to the fifth or sixth century—when it was written. How, we may boldly ask, did the Evangelist, how did the general body of the disciples of Christ, regard a woman about whom they believed this stupendous history?

Do not let it be said that such a birth is nothing especially strange in its own period, that it belonged to the surrounding paganism as a commonplace. Christianity does not belong to paganism. It first takes root and germinates in the Jewish

people, who are rigid monotheists, who would not dare to image, who would turn with horror from, such a legend. God to the Jew is not a magnified man; He is formless, He is a Spirit, a Mystery, whose Name none may utter. 'Son of God' in Jewish phrase meant nothing thus literal and real (John x. 34, 35); or it belongs, as in Christian theology, to the arcana of Deity (Dan. iii. 25). Observe that the record of this Gospel is of early date; the stamp of its Jewish birth is still upon the Church; it is the tradition received by Jews and from Jews that is recorded.

Or again. What is paganism at the Christian era? You may assert Julius Caesar to be divine, *divus Iulius*, and not without reason from your pagan standpoint,[1] and may offer incense to his statue. But it is flattery, it is hyperbole, it is theosophy; it is not *belief*. Here was a faith for which many suffered death with torment rather than qualify it, the faith that Jesus was God made flesh of the Virgin Mary; and that faith hung from the record of His birth—'begotten of the Holy Ghost.' As a *belief*—to die for—it has nothing to do with the character of that age, with the easy apotheoses of that age;

[1] J. A. Froude, in his *Caesar*, draws a profane parallel between his hero and our Lord, as a literary *tour de force*, perhaps.

it has to do with human nature, we may judge it as the case of you or of me. How should we regard the woman who bore a child and remained virgin, we *believing* it? With uplifted hands, with astonishment, with awe. Add that her Husband is the Creator of the universe, that her Child is the Son of God, that she is bride of the Holy Ghost, let this also be our belief, the current and credited understanding—we should hardly dare to go within ten feet of her, we should enter her presence with abashed gaze, even if we did not kneel before her. Will anyone say that this is not so? Bride of the Holy Ghost—you may phrase it as you please, but the fact is that, the recorded fact, beyond evasion, the fact of that first age, for Apostles, for Evangelists, for all the first disciples or the later converts. And it is a matter of human nature. As it would be for you or me, it was for them. If they believed her the Mother of God, they had awe, inevitable inward awe. If they did not believe her so, they were not Christians.

So much is reached without going beyond the first chapter of the first of the Gospels. Is it not fairly all there? Can anyone pretend that anything has been read into the narrative which it does not contain? On the contrary, the meaning lies quite on the surface, and it is astonishing that anyone should be able to miss it. But the

Gospel is a familiar book, which we were first acquainted with before we had reached sufficient years to reflect, and as it is familiar now, we read it without reflection. It is a sacred book, which we read as a religious exercise, and its language belongs to our religious phraseology, which we take as matter of course, without reflecting what is its real effect and connected sense. And still less do we commonly think of going beyond the written text to discern the mind of the writer and his attitude towards the events and circumstances of which he writes. The Evangelist is representative of his age, and we ought thus to obtain from him, not only the picture of our Lord's life, but another picture of the Christian community in the years immediately succeeding. Thus, to take an illustration from pagan history. In the pages of the historian Livy we have a picturesque account of the early years of Rome; we have also a picture of the attitude of the Romans in the Augustan age towards their early history. The first account is hardly at all historical and of little importance for us, but the other picture is historically important and quite authentic. You grant the facts of the Gospel narrative to be true history, or you may view them critically. But, either way, you should accept St. Matthew's account with the utmost confidence as depicting the atti-

tude and belief of the time in which he wrote, which is the primitive age of Christianity.

St. Luke's Gospel makes additions to what is believed the earlier narrative of St. Matthew. These additions are very probably new matter, new to the Church at large, new even to Apostles and original disciples. The tradition is that at a somewhat later date, when the Crucifixion of our Lord and the events immediately following it were not merely over, but belonged to a receding past, St. Luke was brought into constant and intimate association with the *Mater desolata*, and that for the beginning of his Gospel she was his informer. About this we may take our choice, and the argument is assisted either way. The tradition, if accepted, allows an importance to our Lady within the Church beyond the Protestant notion, if she was thus placed under the special charge of the future Evangelist, and if she was specially consulted in his work. If the tradition is not accepted, the additions of St. Luke become, as the account of St. Matthew, representative of the current belief; and, even with the tradition, a large portion of St. Luke's narrative would still be of that character. This is worth while observing. But in the argument the critical position is allowed so far, and St. Luke's authorship set aside (though the date of composition does not

'Full of grace'; in the Annunciation.

necessarily preclude it for modern research). Consequently there is argumentatively no tradition of the sort to be reckoned with, and for the purposes of the argument the other alternative is available in its entirety; the language of the Gospel expresses the public existing belief.

In St. Luke the marvel of the birth of Christ is artistically heightened—the design is quite on the surface—by being brought into juxtaposition with the other marvel of the birth of His forerunner, the Baptist, the circumstances of which are accordingly detailed. St. John the Baptist is, like Isaac, the child of aged parents, the child thus of miracle, the child of promise. But he is conceived and born in the natural way of generation. His birth is a sign to the Virgin (i. 36, 45) of the reality of the angelic message to herself, as the less is a sign of the greater, as Jonas of the Resurrection of Christ (Matt. xii. 40), or as Elias of the Baptist himself (xvii. 12); his separate life is coincident with, if not due to, her visitation (Luke i. 41, 44); his mother under divine inspiration (ver. 41) abases herself before the future mother of her Lord as before a royal personage. How Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, is again declared in the most awe-inspiring language—could we but rid ourselves of the attitude of religious reading, and read the Gospel

as literature with natural apprehension and reflection. Who is she who can be brought into such relation with the Supreme Majesty of the Universe—'the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (ver. 35)—and not, as in pagan fable, be consumed to ashes in the intensity of the white original light of flame (Exod. xxiv. 17)? Compare, *e.g.*, the attitude of Agar (Gen. xvi. 13), of Jacob (xxxii. 30), of Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 20–23), of Elias (3 Kings xix. 13), or of Manue (Judges xiii. 22).

All the attributes and titles held by the Mother of God in the confession of the Catholic Church are first given her by the angel of the Annunciation and by the sequence of St. Luke's gospel. The epithet 'full of grace' (*κεχαριτωμένη*, Luke i. 28) is not open to misunderstanding, however inadequately expressed in English phrase. We have to conceive what the expression was in the language used by the angel, of which the Greek of St. Luke is in the first place a translation.[1] It is not, as in the expression,

[1] The Greek *χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη* appears to be a *jeu de mots*, but probably attempts to give what was a verbal identity in the original. In the Old Testament we do not find any form of salutation in use, not even *Shalom* (Luke xxiv. 36) in the earlier time, and *Shalom* is not *χαίρειν* (cp. Matt. xxviii. 9). We might conjecture the Hebrew verb *Hanan* twice occurring, or combined with the cognate substantive *Hen* or other derivative. The verbal identity

God be gracious to thee' (Gen. xliii. 29), or 'If I have found grace in thy sight' (xviii. 3), in spite of the angel actually using the latter phrase (ver. 30); which is not, therefore, a bare repetition of the first address. Rather, as in 'The Lord will give grace to the meek' (Prov. iii. 34), and 'Grace is poured on thy lips' (Ps. xliv. 3). The word χάρις, 'grace,' independently of St. Paul's elucidation of it, is perfectly determinate in New Testament usage; and the verb is cognate, expressing the bestowal of grace (See Eph. i. 6, a *locus classicus*, which puts the matter beyond dispute). The participle, then, expresses that already, at the time of the Annunciation and anterior to it, Mary has been given some extraordinary endowment, qualifying her for the prerogative of becoming Mother of God and for the part which she was thus called to play in the order of Redemption. Mary is one who 'has been given grace,' a special gift of God (ver. 28), because she 'found grace,' favour, in the sight of God, or perhaps she found this grace because she had been given the other. In justification, then, of the translation *gratia plena*, 'full of grace,' it may be remarked that κεχαριτωμένη may easily be equivalent to πεπληρωμένη χάριτος, and only differ from the attribute πλήρης χάριτος,

or *jeu de mots* is continued in ver. 30: 'thou hast found grace (χάρω) with God.'

which is applied to the Divine Word—a great difference, however—as in the one case the fulness of grace is bestowed and in the other original. This necessary and proper distinction is no doubt missed both in the Latin and in the English, but is a commonplace in Catholic instruction, and fully understood by the merest child who says the *Hail Mary*.

'Blessed' in the Visitation.

Mary is called 'blessed' by Elizabeth on the occasion of her visitation. It is futile to attempt here any distinction between the verbal adjective (ver. 68) and the participle, as the same word is applied in the immediate context to our Lord also: 'Blessed—*εὐλογημένη*—art thou among women, and blessed—*εὐλογημένος*—is the fruit of thy womb' (ver. 42). The epithet belongs to Catholic devotion, and is common in the ordinary language of Catholics. It is avoided by Protestants, and excites unreasonable antipathy, considering that it originates in the Gospel narrative. If it is blameworthy in the Church's use, it must likewise be so in the mouth of St. Elizabeth, who in thus addressing her visitor is declared to have been 'filled with the Holy Ghost.'

Besides the title 'Mother of God' and the appellatives 'blessed' and 'full of grace,' Catholics call Mary pre-eminently 'Virgin,' and style her 'Immaculate.' The first of these titles is already

proclaimed in the prophecy quoted by St. Matthew, 'Behold, the Virgin shall be with child' (i. 23; cp. Is. vii. 14; in the Hebrew also the article is prefixed), where the addition of the article seems to make her pre-eminently virgin, *Virgo virginum*, or, at any rate, to denote one who should be distinguished above others by the name, as being her proper designation.[1] St. Matthew adds that she was married to Joseph only in name (vv. 18, 25).[!] This becomes more unmistakable in St. Luke's narrative (if we were not so obtuse, and if we could read it as literature), where, at the Annunciation, Mary replies to the angel: 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' The sentence must mean that she is vowed to perpetual virginity, or else it has no meaning. 'Thou *shalt* conceive, Mary, for thou *art* betrothed.' There is no meaning in the reply, 'I *am* a maid,' because she is about to be a wife. The reply must be: 'Though a wife, I remain a maid, and nothing else shall I ever be.' *Virgo prius ac posterius* is the account of both Evangelists, and, in the version of the third, beyond

'Immaculate Virgin'; in the narrative throughout.

[1] There is no possible evasion by the supposition of a generic use of the article, which is unknown in Hebrew. The 'Douay' English version omits the article as translating the Latin 'Vulgate,' but it may be feared that the Protestant 'Authorized Version' had a different reason for the same omission.

evasion or misunderstanding. To think of all that has been written on this head, whether the 'brethren' of our Lord (Matt. xii. 46, etc.) were the natural children of Mary and Joseph, and about several other things, by Protestants! And it was plain in the Evangelical account—and what else is there anywhere except the Evangelical account to go upon?—that Joseph, as constantly affirmed in Catholic tradition, knowingly married a consecrated virgin, being 'a just man' (i. 19), and his 'fear,' when he knew that she was pregnant—every other interpretation being *ipsis verbis* excluded—was lest it should be supposed that, being thus consecrated, she had been his wife otherwise than in name (See Judges xi. 39). This matter also may be somewhat obscure in the sentence of St. Matthew's gospel; but St. Luke's account, as above, gives the key. But, even in St. Matthew, the ordinary Protestant explanation is as clearly excluded as anything can be. For how, if the case were ordinary, would it less 'expose' (*παραδειγματίσαι*) Mary, if she were divorced, that is, in our manner of expression, if the betrothal (i. 18) were not completed by marriage? Surely this would be precisely what would 'expose' her, and she would not be exposed without it! But only an exceptional Protestant will admit that he spoke hastily in this matter, as he did also in the former.

Clear both densities out of the mind, and it is hardly calculable how much advance is made towards appreciation of the simple witness of Evangelists to the magnificence of Mary.

The *immaculate* sanctity of Mary is suggested by her pre-eminent virginity, as above, by her virgin consecration, and still more as she is entitled 'full of grace' and has 'found grace with God' (Luke i. 30). Those who thus receive 'grace for grace' are saints, as Noe was 'perfect in his generations' (Gen. vi. 9; cp. v. 22, 24), and 'found grace in the eyes of the Lord' (vi. 8); or as Daniel was '*homo dilectionum*'[1] (Dan. x. 11), or as Job was 'a simple and an upright man' (Job ii. 3), these three singled out as the favourites of heaven and prevailing intercessors, if any (Ezech. xiv. 14, 20). Nor yet had any been so highly favoured as Mary, who was to bring forth the Desire of all nations; *Regina sanctorum omnium*, therefore, supreme among Saints, immaculate. It need make no difference to the truth and propriety of any epithet or title applied to the Blessed Virgin, though it should have been neither written nor equivalently expressed in the sacred narrative. It is not unsuitable to speak of St. John as 'the divine,' and it is theologically true to call God 'indivisible.' But neither of these words occurs, in

[1] 'A man of desires.'

fact or in sense, anywhere in the New Testament. It cannot be too often repeated that the testimony of Scripture is neither final nor complete. The testimony, however, to its extent is valid and preferential, not to be ignored; our earliest, our most trustworthy, testimony. And the word 'virgin' and the sense of 'immaculate' do belong to the first chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The language belongs to the writers of the Gospels, it belongs to their age, which, if not the Apostolic, immediately succeeds the Apostolic, and is the direct creation of Apostles. 'Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners'—might have been addressed to the Blessed Virgin during her lifetime by anyone of the Eleven, and such speech was according to their mind to address to her.[1] They could not have shrunk from using the language, they must have felt themselves happy to use the language, which was consecrated by the mouth of an angel of God. And they believed it to have been so consecrated, because an Evangelist believed it, and what he believed they also believed. The manner of address was not otherwise than according to their national style,

[1] In the *Protevangelium Iacobi* Mary is continually thus addressed—as a kind of scenic characterisation.

because St. Elizabeth, who was one of their company, employed it (cp. Gen. xiv. 19, 20; Ruth iii. 10; 1 Kings xv. 13, etc.). 'Pray for us sinners.' As the queen-mother Bethsabee was moved to intercede with her son Solomon (3 Kings ii. 17). Or as God accepted the prayer of Job (Job xlii. 9), which he offered for his offending friends. As St. Paul asked the prayers of his Ephesian converts (Eph. vi. 19), or of his 'dearly beloved' Philemon (Philem. 22)—'Pray for me a sinner' (1 Tim. i. 15)—and believed that through their prayers he would gain from God additional grace.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RECORD OF THE LIFE

THE story of the birth of Christ becomes in St. Luke's narrative one of poetry and romance—the arrival at Bethlehem, the birth in the stable, the adventure of the shepherds, the multitude of singing angels, the Babe lying in the manger. This romantic aspect had not escaped altogether the earlier historian, who told of the journey of the Magi following the sign of the star to adore the new-born King in Jewry. We must certainly inquire, in what character does Mary appear in these scenes; is she conspicuous or thrown into the shade? In the painting of the 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' by Correggio, the glory of the face of the Divine Infant is reflected in that of His Mother as she bends over Him. Do the narrators, then, conceive of the Christmas marvel and mystery ending in the Babe?

The Virgin and Child.

We may, in the first place, again rest the evidence on human nature. For nothing is so universally and properly human as birth, unless

it is death. In any birth, surely the mother has her part in the honour and rejoicing. We do not need to investigate the usage of the Jews; it is enough to know our own customs at the present time; human nature does not alter. 'God,' said royal Sara at the birth of Isaac, 'has made me to laugh, so that all they that hear will laugh with me' (Gen. xxi. 6). When John the Baptist was born, it is recorded that his mother's 'neighbours and kinsfolk heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her' (Luke i. 58). 'Thus has the Lord dealt with me,' said Elizabeth, 'in the days wherein He looked upon me to take away my reproach among men' (ver. 25). So Mary said: 'He that is mighty—*El Gibbor*—has done to me great things.'

The shepherds 'came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger.' The Magi 'saw the young Child and Mary His mother,'[1] and poured out their treasures before the Child in His Mother's lap. This was the King of the Jews whom they had come to adore. And who was she? The Queen-Mother, therefore, and that to the Oriental mind. We have to think of an Atossa, an Athalia, a Semi-

[1] It is illustrative of the mind of either Evangelist that Joseph is named second in the one passage, and is not mentioned at all in the other.

ramis. The Magi, who had faith to recognise the Monarch in the stable, were able also to bow themselves before the Queen-Mother (3 Kings ii. 19), though shorn of her royal state. Though her raiment be not of the gold of Ophir, yet she is 'glorious within' (Ps. xlv. 13).

Both of the Evangelists of the Nativity give genealogies of Jesus, which trace His descent from David (See also Matt. xx. 30; xxi. 9, etc). There would not, perhaps, be any difficulty in obtaining such a genealogy, as the Jews above every people were particular in observing their family descent, and the connection once made with the reigning line in Jechonias, the last King of Judah before the Captivity, or in Zorobabel of the Return (1 Esdras iii. 2, etc.), or in whatever last legitimate descendant of David actually reigned in Jerusalem, the rest became easy, as not being a family matter any longer, but belonging to the chronicles of the nation. The difficulty, however, of the genealogies in the Evangelical narratives is two-fold; first, that the genealogy in St. Matthew is not identical with that given by St. Luke; and secondly, much more bewildering, that both genealogies are traced through Joseph! Now Joseph according to both Evangelists is not the father of Jesus, and St. Luke at the beginning of his genealogy (iii. 23) expressly

The Queen-Mother.

recalls this. The general explanation is either that Mary is of the same family as Joseph, so that the genealogy of both is after one or two generations the same, or else it is really the genealogy of Mary that is given, and Joseph's name as the husband's is substituted for hers.[1] The latter explanation may receive colour from the expression of St. Matthew: 'Joseph the husband of Mary' (i. 16). At any rate, if Jesus is the son of David, Mary must be in the royal line, and this is intended by the genealogy. Thus to the Evangelists, and therefore, according to the argument already expressed more than once, to the Apostles and early disciples, equally as to the Magi, Mary would be the Queen-Mother. The current belief and opinion is that our Lord sits upon the throne of His father David (Luke i. 27; Acts ii. 30), that is to say, that He is the *de jure* King of Judæa at that

[1] Although among the Jews, where there was more than one family, a man was distinguished by the name of his mother (3 Kings i. 5, etc.), or might be so for particular dignity (2 Kings ii. 13. Cp. 1 Paralip. ii. 16); yet generally he was the son of his father (1 Kings x. 21, etc.), even of his legal though not actual father (Deut. xxv. 6). In the succession of the crown females are excluded (Athalia, in 4 Kings xi. 1–16, a clear illegality). Accordingly, even if Mary belonged to the elder branch, and was therefore, according to our notions, in the direct line, still the succession would be reckoned through Joseph, and our Lord's claim to be 'King of the Jews' would to the popular mind be as son of His putative father. (See the Note at the end of the chapter.)

epoch. Mary is, then, of the blood royal in direct descent, and this is appreciated by the early Christian community with all the national, the tribal, the family intensity of the Jewish mind. Mary is no mere peasant woman to the Evangelists, and therefore to the primitive Church, but as Bethsabee herself or as Sara. Being so esteemed—and is there any room for supposing her not to be?—if Mary is of little importance, if she is passed over in the history, it does seem very extraordinary. And yet any earthly title must be of infinitesimal worth as compared with the dignity of Mother of the King of kings.

St. Luke records the subsequent presentation of the Holy Child in the Jewish Temple, where He is greeted by Simeon and Anna, and neither there does His mother pass without observation (ii. 34, 35). She is connected, we discern, by the prophetic utterance of Simeon ('by the Spirit,' ver. 27) with the future conflict of the Light of the world (ver. 32), who will be 'a sign to be contradicted, and through her soul also the sword shall pierce' (ver. 34). The Virgin and Child are not to be separated in the future years.[1] When the days

The Presentation in the Temple.

[1] It should be observed that Simeon has no word for Joseph. After the Babe there is only the Mother in the tableau.

of *His* manifestation are arrived, when He is become the Light of the Gentiles and the Glory of Israel, when He is set up for the fall and resurrection of many, in His public life, in the work He has come down from heaven to do, as Teacher and Redeemer of mankind, then, too, His Mother is to be throughout concerned. A prophetic utterance, recorded as such by the Evangelist, and of its actual accomplishment the recorder is aware (for if known to have failed, would the prophecy be recalled?). A record, then, to be noted and to find its application in the sequel. Our Lady is to have part not only in the Birth but in the Passion, and this is told us in the record of the Birth. ***Along with*** his confession of the Mother of God, the believing student is committed to that of the Mother of Sorrows also.

For the present, however, the stress of the argument lies here—what is the attitude of mind of the Evangelists in recording these several particulars of the birth and infancy; how did they feel towards the person of Mary, who had shared in all these wonders and glories? And thence—what was the feeling of the Apostolic age towards the Mother of Jesus? It is no later development or perversion that worships the Virgin and Child. We are set on to do it by the Gospel narrative of the birth of Jesus—*Venite,*

***adoremus, in Bethlehem.***[1] The beauty, the joy, the glory, of the Nativity was known to Apostles, to the first disciples, to the Church of the first age. When they listened to the words of the Divine Master, when in the after time they celebrated the memory of His atoning Death and triumphant Resurrection from the tomb, their thoughts turned also sometimes meanwhile to His Incarnation, His Infancy, and His Birth. The Mother who had borne and nursed Him, in whose arms He had lain (Luke xi. 27), was still amongst them. Could she be unregarded? Was she unregarded? How, if she was, did Evangelists thus write of her? It is hardly a matter of inference, it is not mere constructive argument, it belongs to the narrative, it belongs to the age of the narrative; as St. Theresa said, so must Apostles and earliest disciples have said to themselves when they looked upon Mary: 'I cannot think of them, of Jesus and of Mary, apart.' They said to her, as Barac said to Debbora (Judges iv. 8): 'If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.'

It is an error, then, to object that our Lady is scantily mentioned in the Gospel, whereas, she occupies the entire foreground; or that she is depicted for us as 'a pious peasant woman,'

[1] 'Come to Bethlehem, let us [there] adore.'

and nothing more, not as the highest attainment of human nature, which Catholics assert her to be, whereas in the Gospel too she is Mother of God, Virgin of virgins, full of grace, blessed as her Son is blessed, and immaculate; or that we have no evidence of the Apostles and first disciples observing that reverence and devotion towards her that later times show, whereas St. Matthew and St. Luke so wrote of her and so esteemed her, and what their attitude was, such should be the attitude of the others; or if not St. Matthew and St. Luke, then at least some writers of the first age, who reflected precisely the Apostolic model.

Absence of Mary from our Lord's Ministry for Protestants.

The objection, however, may take another form. Yes, Mary is naturally and necessarily mentioned in the story of the Nativity, and as she is the Mother of the Word made flesh, so is she Mother of God, and her virtues are depicted and her high prerogatives enlarged upon, when the birth of the Redeemer is to be told. But that being done with, she passes out of the history; she passes out of it, as the work of Christ, the revelation He made of the Father and His redemption of human kind, are matters in which she is not concerned; Christ, as born into the world, has a human mother, but Christ, as teaching, as working miracles, as dying for men, has no more any relation to His family:

'If anyone come to Me and hate not his father and mother, he cannot be My disciple' (Luke xiv. 26)—'Who is My mother and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold My mother and My brethren' (Matt. xii. 48, 49). His mother has nothing to do with the ministry of Jesus; she has passed out of His life. Therefore she has no such part and office in our Redemption and our Christianity as Catholics pretend; the exaltation, the devotional inclusion, of Mary is a later perversion, without any warrant in the Gospel.

When thus amended, shorn of its lofty absolutism—no vague generalization now, but precise and definite statement—there is not so much to cavil at in the representation; though there is still something, and certainly we have here also to sweep on one side the inferences and explanations, the commentary and excursus, by which the text is accompanied. For, granting that our Lady's part in the Gospel ceases with the infancy of her Son, still she has so far a part; it does not alter a syllable of what has been already written; if she is known to the Apostles—and she is known—and not only amid the scenes of our Lord's life, but if also in especial subsequently to the Ascension, it follows that she must be regarded with reverence and

*Ignoratio elenchi.*

devotion as the Mother of the Lord, and there is evidence that she was so regarded in the language of the Evangelists in this beginning of the Gospel, in their account of the Nativity. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin would still belong, and would be proved to belong, to the Apostolic age. It cannot be denied, and there is nothing lost by admitting, that in the Evangelical record Mary is not allowed to have any conspicuous part in the Ministry of Jesus, that is to say, in His teaching, His working of miracles, His forming a company of disciples. 'Did you not know,' said the Child of twelve years old, 'that in what is My Father's, in that I must be' (Luke ii. 49)?[1] They should have known, therefore, where to find Him, in the Temple of His Father. For that time, nevertheless, the Child went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and for eighteen more years was only the Carpenter, both one and the other being the dispensation He had received from His Father; at Nazareth He was still to be found 'in what was His Father's.' For thirty years the work

[1] ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με. The expression is so general as to have a double meaning; primarily, 'in My Father's house [where I am],' but further of any and every occasion in the future, of which the present may be taken as typical. 'I am in the Temple because it is My Father's house, and the works that I do now or hereafter are those of Him who sent Me' (John v. 36).

of God for Him was to be with His Mother. But later His Mother might seek for Him in vain among their kindred and acquaintance (Luke ii. 44); He was engaged in other affairs, which were those of His Father as before, more pre-eminently and specially than before.

But if Mary is excluded from the teaching and the working of miracles and the forming of the company of disciples, it makes no difference. Because the office assigned her in the Church, the devotion paid to her, is not as she is conceived to have a share in any of these things, but solely as she is recorded to be the Mother of God. You must exclude her, not from the Ministry, but from the Nativity, if you are to shake the Catholic position. It is *ignoratio elenchi*. You admit her in the Nativity.

But, further, it is not quite true that Mary has no share in the Ministry, and it is certainly untrue that she is recorded as being absent from it. As she opens the Gospel, so does she open the Ministry. Was it said above that her mediation might be sought as the queen-mother Bethsabee was moved to intercede with her son Solomon? This precisely actual and parallel thing occurs in the 'beginning of miracles' at Cana (John ii. 3). And it is the same with the beginning of everything, the beginning of the public life. The

The 'beginning of miracles.'

first whom our Lord made disciples, St. Andrew and (probably) St. John, came to His house and were invited to stay (i. 39). This was the house of Mary at Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23). The disciples, when they first knew their Master, knew Him with His Mother. And thence at Cana, Mary being a wedding-guest, 'both Jesus and His disciples were invited.' The public life of our Lord takes origin, and is recorded as taking origin, from Nazareth, from His association with His Mother. His work was begun while still with her. Before there was any Andrew or Philip (John i. 43) in His company, those who would reach the future Prophet of Galilee must come to His Mother Mary: 'Madonna, we would see Jesus (xii. 21).' Were there none who would do the same in the early days at least of the Galilean preaching?

The women from Galilee.

Thereafter also, as the three years succeed and pass over, we need to bear in mind that the disciples were not only men, but of both sexes, perhaps especially women (Luke viii. 2, 3; xxiii. 55. Comp. Acts xvii. 4). Women are not allowed to rule in the Christian economy (1 Tim. ii. 12), as neither in the economy of nature (1 Cor. xi. 9, 10); but they are an essential part of both, essential in Christianity, free and honoured in Christianity, as in no other religious or political system before

it. With the monk the nun ; with a St. Benedict a St. Scholastica ; the priest instructs, but before him the mother and the wife ; in the train of the Apostle is 'a sister, a woman' (1 Cor. ix. 5) ; there is Jerusalem and the upper room, but there is also Nazareth and Mary.

Nevertheless this feature might easily be missed by an unreflecting reader. Only occasionally is special mention made of women among those who listened to our Lord's teaching, as, *e.g.*, of her who sat at his feet and heard His word (Luke x. 39). The Jews are Orientals, and, according to the social customs of Orientalism, women, except in the case of extraordinary personages, are kept in the background. Thus (John iv. 27) the disciples wonder that our Lord should talk with a woman. Five thousand are recorded as having been miraculously fed with five loaves (Matt. xiv. 21, etc.), that is to say, five thousand besides women and children ; the Evangelist only conceives the number of men as worth recording.

But the reticence of the Gospel narratives respecting the appearance of women, for which there may be also other reasons outside the nationality of the narrators, should not make us miss the true facts of the case. When 'disciples' are mentioned, it is always possible that women are included, because sometimes the

context informs us that they are (comp. Acts i. 14 with ver. 15). And if thus women are present on one or other occasion, though their presence is not particularly mentioned, we may equally include the Virgin Mary as Mary Magdalene (Luke viii. 2), or as Mary the mother of James and Joses (Matt. xxvii. 56). According to the tradition His Mother was among the wailing women who met our Lord as He bore His cross to Calvary (Luke xxiii. 28). Then 'a great company of people and of women' are mentioned as following. But are, then, women absent from the multitude of Palm Sunday, when no mention of them is made? It is impossible to conclude that it was so. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, obtains occasional mention in the Gospel, and when her name does not occur, we cannot still conclude that she was not in the company. It is apparent from the passages already noticed, when His mother and His brethren inquire for Him, that our Lord, even after He has fully entered upon His ministry, is still not altogether severed from His home (He is perhaps staying there in John vii. 1–9). The holy women, if left without mention in the rest of the narrative, appear at any rate by name on the scene at the close (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; Luke xxiii. 55; John xix. 25). The Mother of Jesus stood beside His cross (John xix. 25), and was particularly

commended to the devotion of the favourite disciple, whether in his individual character, or, as seems more likely, as representative of the Eleven, by the dying Master. John, we are told, thereupon took her *ad sua* (ver. 27), which apparently means, at least in the immediate consequence, to his lodging in Jerusalem,[1] and she reappears at the beginning of the Acts (i. 14) as a *conspicuous* personality in the widowed Church. 'If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.' The Eleven were 'persevering in prayer[2] in the company of the women and of Mary the Mother of Jesus.' Mary was present by implication at the election of St. Matthias, and on the occasion of the Descent of the Holy Ghost (for the πάντες ὁμοθυμαδόν of ii. 1, without specific distinction, may reasonably recall the same expression in i. 14, which includes Mary).[3]

[1] The Greek is εἰς τὰ ἴδια, which had occurred before, (i. 11), when the Word is said to have come 'to His own,' that is, to the world, which is His possession, or to the chosen land of Judah. In the later passage it will then be similarly *chez lui*, to his belongings, to his private dwelling-place. The difficulty or ambiguity of the expression is not unlike that of ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρός μου (mentioned above, p. 42, note).

[2] The expression occurs again in Rom. xii. 12, as also something similar in Acts, ch. ii. 42, 46.

[3] Also identically ii. 46. But the point here is the proximity of the repetition, prior to any recorded addition to those our Lord left behind Him. When 'all' are named, it should

Mary appears thus both at the beginning of the Gospel and at the beginning of the Acts; her personality is present and recognised by the Apostolic body; she is not only allowed among them and recognised, but she is apparently conceded a position of honour, being the only one mentioned by name among the women, as the Eleven are alone mentioned among the men (the names of all, if enumerated, would amount to a hundred and twenty. Acts i. 15); we may say that she has been 'chosen' as the Eleven were chosen, and holds her office as they hold theirs, and that this is intended by her being named when they are named; at any rate, the disciples, it is clear, have accepted with reverence and punctuality, as they could hardly have failed to do, the legacy of their Master. 'Behold thy mother,' was said to the beloved disciple, and, like Eve (Gen. iii. 20), she was to be the mother of all living. At any rate, the disciples of Jesus, when He was gone, regarded His Mother whom He had left behind, as sacred to them, as their Mother, 'a Mother in Israel' (Judges v. 7). Those who had been distinguished, beloved, by Jesus, were not men alone. The women are there. The inclusion of women in the Church, in its religious life and organization, hardly less repugnant to

apparently mean the same persons in one place as in the other.

Jewish ideas than the inclusion of Gentiles, is rendered possible, is compelled, by the original exalted and unique position, from the first, of the Virgin Mother, as the medium of the Incarnation, the mediating link between God and man. 'Both of Mary,' writes St. Ignatius (*ad Ephes.* viii.) 'and of God.'

Mary, then, with other holy women, and supreme among them, obtains recognition, as recorded, in the Pentecostal Church. And not only supreme among them, but the supreme glory of the entire human race, as being privileged by divine grace beyond every other. 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.'

NOTE.—ON OUR LORD'S CONNECTION WITH THE JEWISH MONARCHY.

It is impossible to read the Gospels reflectively without discovering that Joseph and his household represent in the general belief the Davidic royalty, according to the account of things the Evangelists give. Even though Joseph is derisively styled 'the carpenter' (Matt. xiii. 55), it is evidently by an opposing party, and then his royal pretension in fact gives point to the sneer. The charge preferred against our Lord, when His putative father was now dead, of

claiming the kingdom of Judaea, was meant in a perfectly material sense, and the claim was so understood by His immediate disciples (Acts i. 6). He is a second Solomon, who is to build the Temple 'in three days' (Matt. xxvi. 61). He was popularly known as the 'son of David' (xx. 30; xxi. 9, etc.), and this was not understood by His biographers in the sense of His Messianic character—a merely titular descent—because Joseph is represented as also addressed by the title: 'Joseph, thou son of David' (Matt. i. 20; comp. Luke i. 27; ii. 4). The multitude would fain have crowned 'the son of Joseph' (John vi. 15) and set Him up against the Roman power (xi. 48; xix. 12, etc.); He was their King (Luke xix. 38) and while He lived might be a disturbing element in the province. Pilate is familiar with, or easily informed of, the situation, and asks his Prisoner at once: 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' (Mark xv. 2). Pilate sends Him in mockery to the Idumæan usurper (Luke xxiii. 7), and with two-edged malice puts upon His cross the royal title. Certainly to the Jewish authorities our Lord's pretension was fully known (*ib.* ver. 2). We require but the smallest grain of historic constructive imagination to understand that all this hubbub of royalty is not raised about one who has no pretension. The Jews do not give the name 'Son of David' to the first comer. The

descent is there, in fact or in partisanship. Our Lord is either claimant, or at worst pretender. To the partisan, or to the general consciousness, the man and woman who came to David's town were David's lineage (Luke ii. 4; Matt. ii. 5; John vii. 42), though in the eclipse of the national independence the genealogy had little or no significance.

But when an Evangelist, who repudiates the fatherhood of Joseph, or an Apostle (Acts ii. 30), who must be understood to do the same, attributes to our Lord a descent from David and proclaims Him to be the prophesied King-Messiah, it can only mean that the direct line passes from Joachim (or Jacob; Matt. i. 16) through Mary to Jesus. Mary is in the direct Davidic line.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OMISSIONS OF THE GOSPELS

IT was not, then, true to object that His Mother is absent from the Ministry of our Lord, or even that she does not belong to the organized body of disciples, in other words, to the representative Church, as in our Lord's lifetime, or as constituted and endowed by the Pentecostal sign; on the contrary, she may seem to hold rank and office, as the Apostles held rank and office. The occasional references of the Gospel narrative are sufficient to dispel the idea that Mary was unknown to the disciples of the years of the Ministry, or that she was not in the history up to the end of all, or that she was not recognised after the Ascension in the Apostolic Church. From the first miracle of Cana to the Crucifixion and to Pentecost, she is there, in the scenes of our Lord's life, in the record of His biographers. Nevertheless the references are certainly scattered and scanty, and this may need to be explained, if the personality of the Blessed Virgin has the importance that is assigned to it in the Catholic

Church, or even that her reappearance at the beginning of the Acts may be plausibly argued to lend her. The explanation entails some considerable preliminary digression.

Date and distinction of St. John's Gospel.

The Gospel of St. John is generally admitted, by critics and apologists alike, to have been written many years after the Synoptics appeared; at a late period in the Apostle's life, if his work; and when accordingly most or all of the actors were dead and gone. The writer is thus able to allude to matters which his predecessors thought themselves precluded from mentioning, and in especial he identifies the actors and gives them their names. It would be tedious to enumerate all the examples of this being done.

The beginning of his Gospel has many personal reminiscences (*e.g.* i. 40–*fin.*). The episode of Nicodemus is quite new, whether in chapter iii. or in the supplementary allusions of vii. 50 and xix. 39; and similarly the intervention of Caiaphas in xi. 49, or the insistence that he and not Annas was the High Priest of the year of the Crucifixion (ver. 51; xviii. 13; the beloved disciple was *notus pontifici*, ver. 15). It is unnecessary to suggest reasons why reticence should be observed during the lifetime of these high personages. Again, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is only recorded by St. John,

and the silence of the Synoptics has even thrown doubt upon its authenticity with minds sceptically disposed. And yet it was certainly proper to mention, unless there had been some strong reason the other way; it was the most stupendous and beyond evasion of the public miracles,[1] and directly led to the conspiracy of the priests to put our Lord to death (John xi. 46, foll.); the narrative was thus actually incoherent without it. But so long as Lazarus was alive, surely a man who had come back from the other world, from whence or from what, who shall say or even dare to think ?—surely such a man would beyond everything be reluctant to be made a public character; besides, his life, we are positively told, was in danger (xii. 10).

Or again. An Evangelist on his part might shrink from identifying in his narrative a privileged (John xix. 25; xx. 11–18) Saint with the 'woman who was a sinner' of Luke vii. 39. St. Mary Magdalene accordingly appears at the Crucifixion and the Resurrection (Matt. xxvii. 56, 61; xxviii. 1, etc.), but nowhere else in the Synoptics by name. So that some ingenious

[1] A reflective mind might consider the Stilling of the Storm, or the Multiplying of the Loaves, or even the Answering Voice of John xii. 28 to be not less stupendous; but these miracles did not apparently appeal so much to the popular imagination. The first was not public; and see the sequel of the other two (John vi. 30, 31; xii. 29).

commentators have distinguished Mary Magdalene from Mary the sister of Lazarus, and both from the 'sinner'! On her part, St. Mary Magdalene would shrink with the utmost sensitiveness from her meeting with Jesus in the garden after His Resurrection (John xx. 11, foll.) being made public, and herself thus given peculiar distinction.

St. John, however, when he came to write, after her death, or at least her disappearance, has no scruple on either head. He refers on the first introduction of the Saint (xi. 1) to his predecessor's account (ver. 2), and says plainly that the sister of Lazarus was the same as the sinner who anointed our Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair.[1] And he relates the meeting in the Garden in full detail.

Or once more. St. John writes his Gospel beyond a doubt subsequently to the martyrdom of St. Peter. Certainly St. Mary Magdalene might object to her own intimate relation with our Lord being introduced into the Gospel narrative. But St. Peter after Pentecost was a person of supreme authority. He would not only object; he would forbid. The episode of

[1] Besides that this reference precedes his own account of the familiar anointing at Bethany, the locality is not the same in Luke vii. 37, nor the attendant circumstances. It is, moreover, an elementary matter of grammar. ἡ ἀλείψασα, 'who did anoint,' will hardly refer to an incident still to be told. Compare a parallel reference in John xviii. 14.

Ananias would assist his prohibition. He would not allow, for example, any palliation of his denial of the Lord (as in John xx. 3–10, or xxi. 15–19) being placed on record. Like his 'brother Paul' (2 Petr. iii. 15), he was anxious to be esteemed 'the chief of sinners.' But when St. John wrote, the first of the Popes was no longer there to launch a prohibition. It is even supposed—and there is every probability of the supposition being right—that the remark of the Evangelist in John xxi. 19 is made with knowledge of the actual fulfilment of our Lord's saying in the martyrdom, the saying being otherwise obscure. One other instance may be adduced. That it was St. Peter who cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant (John xviii. 10), no one of the Synoptics mentions, though all three narrate the incident; and only St. John gives the servant's name. Anyone can see the reasons for the reticence while the actors were living. In the imperfect light St. Peter was not generally recognised, and only a few knew of its being he (*e.g.*, some kinsman who was present, ver. 26). Nor did Malchus the servant wish to be identified; the recipients of our Lord's miraculous bounty are roughly treated (ix. 34); Malchus may very probably have been converted by the miracle, as the blind man (*ib.* ver. 38), and others (Luke viii. 35; xviii. 43, etc.).

## *THE OMISSIONS OF THE GOSPELS*

By the Synoptics allusion to individuals by name was avoided through the use of the ***generalizing plural***, which is quite an elementary device of style. Thus, when our Lord appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, we hear that 'some doubted' (Matt. xxviii. 17), or that He 'upbraided them' because 'they believed not' (Mark xvi. 14). The unbelief of St. Thomas is intended, or it is at least covered by the general statement. When the Fourth Gospel was published, St. Thomas had long been far away in India and was unlikely to be still living. According to St. Matthew (xxviii. 9) the women who came to the Sepulchre on Easter morning were met by our Lord on their return. But St. Luke (xxiv. 22–24) describes the two disciples on the road to Emmaus observing with melancholy that our Lord had not been seen by those of their number who had gone to the Sepulchre to verify the report of the women, and the context implies that the women also had not seen Him. It is of course only one of the women to whom our Lord appeared, and the name of St. Mary Magdalen is again withheld. So in St. Luke are the names of St. Peter and St. John (John xx. 3), who are only 'some of those with us.' Even the name of the traitor Judas is suppressed on the occasion of the Anointing at Bethany, when there are recorded to have been 'some who had

indignation' (Mark xiv. 4), or even quite generally 'the disciples' (Matt. xxvi. 8), over the extravagant expense. The Fourth Gospel identifies the objector, as not being several persons, but Judas by himself (John xii. 4–6), though both the betrayal (Matt. xxvi. 14, etc.) and the suicide of the traitor are passed over. A missing detail is supplied at a later period, when the arch-crime was cold, and there was no fresh feeling of abhorrence against the criminal which might be exacerbated.

Finally, then, the Fourth Gospel abounds in names, even of localities difficult to identify (iii. 23). The only unnamed person among those prominent in the narrative is the Evangelist himself,[1] and his name is suppressed with the same motive that governed some of the suppressions in the Synoptics.[2]

[1] As regards the periphrasis which St. John uses to describe himself (but not always, *e.g.*, i. 35; xxi. 2), we should recall to mind that the writing is by inspiration (below, p. 80) and not by his own instance. Among the revelations of St. Theresa in one of the colloquies we have: '"They call me Theresa of Jesus." "And they call Me Jesus of Theresa."' Moreover the appearance of vain-glory is consequent upon our recognising the writer, but he wrote anonymously and conceived his identity to be concealed. Sceptics should not find fault here, because for them the writer is unidentified still.

[2] The argument of the text might obviously have a reverse application, and go to establish the early date of the Synoptic Gospels. These are anterior to the Fourth, and certainly there seems to be no explanation of their omissions so

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Humility of Saintship in the Apostolic age.

It is difficult for ordinary mortals to understand the absolute humility, which seems to belong to Saintship, and is frequently expressed in the language and behaviour of Saints of every age—'morbid' humility some confident moralists of our time term it—an unreserving self-abasement, which is not merely unwilling to have any creditable or praiseworthy action ascribed to oneself, but would wish to be covered with shame and obloquy. 'Morbid' it is termed as displayed in the later hagiology of the Church. But St. Paul's styling himself 'the chief of sinners' is also 'morbid exaggeration,' without adequate apology or explanation from expositors who cannot get into sympathy or touch with it, expositors learned in the higher ethics. From similar motive we observe that St. Peter also in his First Epistle ignores (inconveniently enough for Papal controversy [1]) his own title of the Rock, and his

plausible as this of the actors being alive when they appeared. Otherwise, the common experience is the reverse—names are given in narratives written nearer the events, but omitted, through forgetfulness or uncertainty, in later compilations. (Or we must suppose the Fourth Gospel to make up names according to the writer's fancy!) But if the actors are still alive, the period of writing is within the age of the Evangelists whose names the Gospels bear.

[1] Except that the images of the Rock and the Shepherd (cp. ii. 25) are characteristic and elaborated, and there is a self-consciousness of manner in their avoidance from himself.

unique commission (John xxi. 15–17) to feed the flock; the Rock is Christ (1 Peter ii. 6–8), and the presbyters whom he addresses are to be the pastors (v. 2). And thus the characteristic, the 'note,' of humility does not merely belong to a later St. Francis or St. Rose of Lima; it belongs to the Apostles and to the Apostolic age, even to —— (Matt. xxvii. 14).

Humility of Mary obstructs the record.

We apprehend, then, that omission of the names of persons and omission of incidents may occur without the persons being really absent from the history, and without the incidents being unauthentic. And we understand what is frequently a leading motive of these omissions. Our Lady, as Queen of Saints, possesses all the characteristics of Saintship in a pre-eminent degree, and among them the extreme height or depth of humility which has been portrayed. 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord'—the slave—*ἡ δούλη Κυρίου*. 'He hath regarded the humbleness of His handmaid'—of His slave—*τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ*. 'He hath exalted the humble.'

She would not ever speak of the marvels of her youth—of the Annunciation, of the Nativity, of the wondrous Infancy, when she suckled and tended *quod natum est ex ea Sanctum*,[1] of the holy Childhood. The humility of Mary is depicted,

[1] 'The Holy that was born of her.'

vith the graphic simplicity of the inspired ıarrative, in a single phrase—the humility of he self-effacing silent mother: 'Mary kept all hese sayings, pondering over them in her heart' Luke ii. 19, 51). Only the youthful St. Luke,[1] he consoler and comfort of those with him (Col. v. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11) might some fortunate ıour be told something. It would be revealed o her that he was the future Evangelist. Or, ıgain. The record of the Virgin Mother within he period of the Ministry of our Lord, the merely ncidental and all too scanty record, is replenished n the Gospel of St. John (ii. 1–11; xix. 25–27). 3ut, besides the consideration already advanced, ıf his record being subsequent to the Virgin's leath and therefore unrestricted, St. John had ıeen since Calvary the best beloved of the disiples with Mary also, and he might naturally be nother who knew.[2] But otherwise of the early nysteries, beyond the outline of St. Matthew, t is extremely likely, as already suggested, hat nothing was known generally, not even o Apostles and intimate disciples, and the ıarrative of St. Luke, published also, it would

[1] For the supposed connection of St. Luke with our Lady, ɜe above, p. 23.

[2] What he records, however, are simply incidents in which e was specially present. (See pp. 43, 46.) Still his larger nowledge might give more importance in his view to these dditions.

seem,[1] after the death of the Virgin, was all new. Afterwards, in the public life of our Lord, there might be little to record of His Mother. Except her devotion still to Him, and the reverent and affectionate regard in which she was held by those who became His disciples. And either of these things it would be most offensive to her to have recorded.

Otherwise, what part would Mary play, and where would she come into the narrative? *Optimam partem elegit.*[2] She kept herself in the background, still observing the events of the Divine Manifestation as they occurred, and pondering them over in her heart. There might occur again in the three years such an occasion as that of the marriage at Cana, or as the one or two other interventions recorded by the Evangelist; but they were only such occasions. The occasions are trivial and sufficiently exhibited by specimen. The acts of our Lord Himself are not always needful to record. 'Many other signs Jesus did in the presence of His disciples which are not written' (John xx. 30).

[1] St. Luke's Gospel is apparently composed after his association with St. Paul (2 Cor. viii. 18), and the critics find in it some traces of the influence of the Apostle of the Gentiles (below, p. 71) or at any rate of special adaptation to the lines of his teaching. This would be, according to the tradition, after the Virgin's death.

[2] 'She has chosen the best part.'

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The Gospels, if read with intelligence, fully express the situation, so far as our curiosity is concerned with it. What we want to know, and it is blindness not to find that in the Gospel, is that our Lord in His public life is not parted from His Mother; she does not lose Him as a mother may sometimes lose her son in the career he has chosen. And the little that is told of her is thus little out of respect for her wishes, and for fear of anything that would give her pain. To thoughtful consideration there is nothing to be explained or accounted for in the omission of Mary's personality from the public Ministry. She would not have been the chosen Handmaid, alone found worthy to bear the name of Mother of God, if she had broken for a moment her nun-like stillness. *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.*[1] Yet the virtues of Mary, the glories of Mary, are evidenced as being known to the first age, and are mirrored for us, but for our perverseness, in the Gospel. Accordingly, there is nothing novel, nothing of 'development,'[2] in our present attitude as Catholics to our Lady. Queen of

[1] 'My beloved is mine and I am his.'

[2] Cardinal Newman, but while still a Protestant, seems to suppose that devotion to our Lady began with the Council of Ephesus (*Development of Christian Doctrine*, chap. iv. sect. ii. 10)! He must, however, often have read the opening chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke. These writers esteemed her as Mother of God, etc. (as above, p. 40), and had no devotion to her, nor did it prevail in the primitive

Saints, Mother of God, she is to us and was to the first disciples ; the one above all others in earth or heaven, who, if we can obtain her prayers, will best avail with God for us, as at Cana what she asked, or hardly asked, was done. Pray for us, Mother of God, now and at the hour of our death. As thou didst pray for the dying Joseph, thy spouse ; as thou didst pray for John thy adopted son, and for Luke the beloved physician. These also knew thy glories and desired thy prayers.

The Assumption.

For all is not yet told. The Assumption of our Lady is perhaps first mentioned in the *Transitus Mariae* (*i.e.* the 'Translation,' though some editions have actually '*Assumptio*') attributed to St. John the Apostle.[1] The Assumption is, for Protestants, a fable. And yet this first account of it is dated by Tischendorf as not later than the fourth century,[2] and the Gospel of St. John was considered by numbers of Protestants, only a few years ago, to claim no earlier date and no better authenticity. The

age! It was an age of unexampled dulness and insensibility!

[1] Johannes Theologus. The authorship is no doubt erroneously attributed.

[2] One of the Latin versions is composed or edited by pseudo-Melitus, who asserts the doctrine in his preface. This goes towards fixing a date. St. Epiphanius (*Adv. Haer.* Lib. i. Tom. iii.; *Haeres.* xlii. 352) accepts the account; also St. John Damascene (*De Dormit. B. V. M.*).

evidential value, then, of the *Transitus*, as evidencing the belief of the age in which it appeared, if evidencing no more, must obtain no inferior respect to that which was allowed to the Fourth Gospel in the time of our fathers. The Assumption is not to be set aside as having 'no evidence in early historical documents.'[1] It is no modern, no medieval, embellishment. Fable or not, the belief in it is primitive.

The Assumption belongs to the ordinary belief of Catholics.[2] Its commemoration is a principal Feast of the Church; it forms one of the Mysteries of the Rosary; religious societies and edifices

[1] Morris, *Jesus, the Son of Mary*, Part III., Chap. VIII.

[2] It is not *de fide*, or, as some say, not an article of faith. The distinction is theological; what is *de fide* is to be believed under pain of damnation. There are many matters to which no such solemnity attaches, but which equally belong to the tradition and are accepted without hesitation. It is not *de fide* that St. Peter was martyred at Rome, or that the Gospel attributed to St. Luke was really written by him. Again, what is *de fide* concerns the Christian revelation and redemption. All the propositions of preceding pages regarding our Lady are confessed by Catholics, but only some few are to be received as *de fide*, only such as bear upon her having been Mother of God. It makes no difference to the general belief. *E.g.*, it is not *de fide* that Mary is *our* Mother. But who doubts it? The Immaculate Conception of Mary has been recently declared to be *de fide*, because the Mother of God must have no contact at all with evil. But it was generally believed from the first. (See below, Part II. chap. viii.) If Benedict XIV. 'saw no sufficient grounds for making the Assumption an article of faith' (Morris), neither did Sixtus IV. for making the Immaculate Conception. But did he therefore disbelieve or doubt it?

are under its dedication. For Catholics the Assumption is an event that actually occurred. It occurred during the lifetime of most of the Apostles; it was known to Apostles and to the Church of the Apostolic times.

The Apostles went to the tomb of Mary, as they had gone to that of her Son, and found it empty. She had not risen as He rose; she did not appear to them, as He had appeared, in the body of her resurrection. But the seal of the grave had been broken in her case just the same. God had taken her sacred body, the body in which He had lain, up to His right hand (Ps. xlv. 9). Whatever awe might have been felt before for the Mother of God, was heightened and deepened by this stupendous parallel. St. Paul writes of our Lord (Rom. i. 4), that He was determined to be the Son of God by His Resurrection. What, then, was Mary determined to be by her Assumption? For the moment, and apart from the divine assistance which the Apostles continually possessed, if one considers it, there might well have been the danger lest Mary should really be exalted in Christian idea —as Protestants falsely accuse the Church of having subsequently exalted her—to a semi-divinity, to a share in the inalienable prerogative of the Supreme Being. Let her be, as she is, but one of God's creatures, yet she is determined

by her Assumption to be the highest of created beings—by her Assumption, which follows, and is inevitably compared with, the Resurrection of Christ. To the Apostles, who are witnesses of her body having left the tomb, she appears now evidently, if she had not appeared before, as on a different level altogether from their own.

Does anyone really suppose that they did not observe the memory of this wonderful day, that the day of the Assumption was no sacred day to the Apostles in the first age? If you do not grant that, if you are in any doubt about it, if you imagine the devotion of the Assumption to originate in the fourth century, to be no Apostolic tradition, then you do not honestly believe in the Assumption as an occurrence, but you let it go as only not disprovable, as possible and no more, as belonging to religion and not to history. Is not that so?

But devotion to Mary after her death and assumption alters its character there and then; it becomes a religious devotion, a solemnity, a ritual of the other world and not of this, of the world to which divine faith and prayer and the worship of God belong. If the Assumption is a fable, *cadit quaestio*; this part of the argument falls to the ground. Yet even then it is only this part; the preceding exposition remains. But the *Transitus Mariae* belongs to the fourth

century. What is the meaning of that? Did pseudo-Johannes invent not only his narrative but also the theme of it? Not altogether, one would say, neither theme nor narrative. That is not the manner of forgeries. There must be a likelihood; the common understanding cannot be directly traversed, if the forgery is to pass unobserved. Nor is it the manner of the Catholic Church to canonize any belief whatever on the authority of any pseudo-Johannes. Thus the *Transitus* is not the origin of the belief, but is evidence of the belief existing in its day; just as the language of St. Epiphanius is evidence. For Catholic belief, in the primitive as in the later age, the Assumption is an actual fact. It was known to the Apostles. Can anyone see any possible evasion, then, granting the Assumption to have actually occurred, and within the knowledge of the Apostles—any possible evasion of the preceding hypothesis of what the character would subsequently be of the devotion to Mary within the Apostolic age and for Apostles themselves? In the Christian religion as preached, in the Christian worship as practised, within the first age, the commemoration of Mary had incontrovertibly its place. The Apostles could not preach Jesus born of a pure Virgin without commemorating the glory of Mary who was Mother of God, and they knew her now to have

been crowned Queen of Saints by her Assumption.

Whether her prayers were asked in her exaltation, as they had been asked undoubtedly in her humility on earth,[1] of this, as of so many things about Mary, of the reverence and regard for the Mother of God while yet alive, we have no information.[2] But whether prayer or not, there was certainly, one would say, religious devotion, a sacred remembrance. *Assumpta est Maria in caelum; collaudantes benedicunt Dominum.*[3]

[1] See above, p. 31.

[2] That the prayers of saints are still offered in heaven may perhaps be conceded to Apoc. vi. 10. Whether their assistance was invoked by those on earth is alone in question. In the inscriptions on some of the tombs in the catacombs the departed is invoked to pray for surviving friends. *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis*, if not Apostolic, is certainly very early in use.

[3] 'Mary is assumed into heaven; praising they bless the Lord.'

## CHAPTER V

### THE OMISSIONS OF THE ACTS AND EPISTLES

By natural inference and by necessary hypothesis, according to the argument of preceding chapters —will anyone say that the inference is not natural and the hypothesis not necessary?—a position is discovered for our Lady within the first age not materially different from that which is at present assigned her. She is for St. Luke and for all his contemporaries as much Queen in heaven as Princess of the house of David on earth. *Tu post Jesum Christum omnis spes mea*[1] —was the aspiration of every earliest Christian disciple. Queen of Apostles no less. Glorious within, her clothing is of gold. And yet——

Absence of Mary's name from inspired Epistles.

There is not a word of Mary anywhere in the rest of the New Testament after the Gospels, not anywhere in the Acts (after the first chapter), her name not once occurring in any Epistle. What are we to make of it? There is the necessary hypothesis, and it does not suit the facts. The

[1] 'Thou after Jesus Christ all my hope.'

natural inference is contradicted to all appearance absolutely. Were the inference and the hypothesis *ab initio* false? Or what is the matter? It is something fairly to rub one's eyes over. One may carefully reconsider the arguments and reflections preceding. Surely some small conclusion, some conclusion of the kind suggested, though it were not so large and absolute, must be drawn. But this failure of Epistolary writers does not permit any conclusion of the kind at all to be drawn. It is strange. Look, for example, at the book of the Acts. It is thought to have been written by the same St. Luke who made the Prologue to his Gospel about Mary, giving her a glory no mortal even dares to envy. It is cited as his work by the very earliest writers. Supposing there was anything to be written about Mary, could St. Luke (in the Acts) designedly leave it out, and if so, from what possible motive?

But the connection of St. Luke with the post-Evangelical writings goes further. He was the special friend of St. Paul (Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11), and is said[1] to have written his Gospel at the instigation of the Apostle of the Gentiles, under his direction, and for the use of the Gentile churches he had founded;[2] traces are discovered

[1] Tertullian, *adv. Marcion.* iv. 15.

[2] The introduction of the name of Theophilus (Luke i. 3;

of the Apostle's influence and even of verbal identity with his teaching (comp. Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23–26). St. Paul, then, knew about the Prologue; it was inserted in the Gospel authorised by him; he knew that in Mary was fulfilled most conspicuously the supereminence of our race: 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour' (Ps. viii. 5; comp. Heb. ii. 7). And yet not a word of Mary, to his converts, to Timothy, to Titus. Imagine how anyone in these days at the earliest likely stage would introduce into Catholic instruction the name of Mary; how to those who knew their religion every exhortation, every appeal, would be by Mary, by the model of Mary, by our duty to Mary, by her patronage, in her name. And never a word of her in all these Epistles of St. Paul, no chance reference even, as if for him she did not exist. He had gone up to Jerusalem to see Peter (Gal. i. 18), and had not seen Mary!

Or St. Peter, on his part? He was evidently in the company of St. John at the time of our Lord's Passion (John xviii. 15; xx. 2). And even independently, the families of Jonas and Zebedee are intimately allied (Luke v. 10;

comp. Acts i. 1) merely represents a dedication. The name cryptically designates a powerful patron, who has the same title as the Procurator Felix (Acts xxiii. 26).

John xxi. 2). When St. John took the stricken Mary *ad sua*, he took her where St. Peter was; with that solemn commendation from the Cross fresh in his memory; here was she who was to be henceforth mother of the disciple, of every disciple. And St. Peter writes Epistles in most moving terms, with every impassioned appeal (*e.g.*, 1 Pet. ii. 21–*fin*), and leaves Mary out!

Or what is to be said of St. John himself? He had *added* to the history of the Ministry of our Lord the record of His Mother's prevailing intercession at Cana, and to the history of the Passion the record of Mary's appointment to be the Mother of all redeemed. He writes nothing in public or private epistle, nothing about her. He writes to a woman whom he styles 'elect' (2 John 1), and forgets to name her who was mother of the chosen Seed, that is, if you admit the Epistle as authentically his. Or, at any rate, he writes, without question of authenticity, in his First Epistle, to insist that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,' *verum corpus natum ex Maria virgine*,[1] and refuses to add *ex Maria virgine*.

Or what is to be said of St. James Minor and St. Jude, among the 'brethren of the Lord,' nephews, that is to say, of Mary, who, one would imagine, would not leave her out?

[1] 'True body born of the Virgin Mary.'

It is most extraordinary, if our preceding argument here is reliable; and one cannot see where it breaks down; even a Protestant, one would think, must subscribe to every step except the final reference. It does not seem that it could have happened so by accident. Given the recognition of Mary and the devotion to her that we have found existing, in SS. Matthew and Luke and therefore in the Apostles generally, or as a tradition of Apostles lifted intact out of their teaching, and the chances are anything you please against her name being nowhere. If lifted out of the Apostles' teaching, why is it not found in their teaching? It looks as if it was done with a studied purpose, by a common understanding. Let the name of Mary be tabooed like the name of Judas; let us carefully revise everything we have written and strike her name out wherever occurring; all reference to her or allusion to her, let us spare the feelings of those we address by avoiding it altogether!

Refutation of the sceptical rationale.

Doubtless there is one explanation of this discrepancy that readily suggests itself and that influences, both consciously and unconsciously, the religious mind of many people who have a notion that they must fashion their beliefs for themselves, though without the intellectual qualifications of Plato, and even Plato being disallowed in Christianity

(1 Cor. i. 26). The explanation has occurred on a former page, and the language is but little varied. Mary is not mentioned in Acts or Epistles, so we are to conclude, because she is of no importance whatever; no one has ever heard of her or thought of her. Our Lord was born of simple Galilean peasants; He forgets His own people and His father's house, He and not the king's daughter, not Mary (Ps. xlv. 10); He has a mission to accomplish, the greatest of all missions; He is reproached with His origin (Mark vi. 3), but He brushes aside the entanglement and evades it (iii. 31–35): 'I give up My mother for you My chosen friends; you are mother, brother, sister, to Me; I have no mother else to call so.' The story of His preternatural birth is a later addition, such as the enthusiasm of his followers with the lapse of time invents for any prophet, for any religious founder; and that it is merely such later legend is proved by St. Paul knowing nothing of it. Christ, according to St. Paul, is to be the Son of God because He rose from the dead; there was nothing to say about His birth, which was no different from ours.

This is the first-hand explanation, no doubt; the natural explanation for hundreds in our individualistic age, who decide to look into the matter for themselves, having no literary or scholastic competence of any kind, and never

thinking that such competence is required. There is one objection to the validity of the explanation. Suppose there to be no more, this one objection absolutely fatal—the evidence of date. Just as Carlyle tells us we may have the most harmonious economical and financial system, which yet breaks against the evidence of 'cash deficit.' Owing to the concentration of attention upon the date of the Gospels, as observed at the outset, we have it now established that they belong to the Apostolic age or are scarcely removed from it. If Mary is not found in Acts or Epistles, she is found in the Gospels, which are contemporaneous in composition. St. Paul himself, if his ignorance of Mary's personality is alleged, alludes to St. Luke's writing his Gospel, the Gospel of the Annunciation (2 Cor. viii. 18, 19); or if that is not the allusion, it altogether escapes us. The modern sceptic, indeed, is now so hardy (he has no other resource) as to reject all but a few of the Epistles of St. Paul; some reject all without exception.[1] But since the failure of the attack upon the authenticity of the Gospel, one need not spend time over this kind of thing. Again, the composition of the Acts of the Apostles is professedly subsequent to the production of some Gospel (Acts i. 1), which is generally supposed to be that of St. Luke,

[1] *E.g.*, the recent *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. Paul.

who would be the writer of both Acts and Gospel.[1]

We may make it clear to our minds, then, that the writers of Epistles ought to have the beliefs about our Lady, and the consequent reverence and devotion towards her, which are evidenced to belong to the Apostles by being entertained by St. Luke, their contemporary and associate. But the writers of Epistles have not these beliefs, to judge from their writings. Is this contradiction to be left unsolved? How is it to be accounted for?

The reasons that excluded our Lady from the continuous narrative of the Gospels, would not apply to the present case. It is not a question of whether she is retiring and her sanctity accom-

[1] These literary identifications are thought to be too intangible to bear any weight of argument, and may be viewed with a smile by the sceptically erudite. But this is to misconceive the situation. If the Gospels were written no one knows precisely when, the allusions they furnish might no doubt be more easily disallowed. But when the date of the Gospels is already by external evidence brought so near that of their titular origin, any internal evidence discovered in them occupies a very different footing. Just as also with allusions to the Gospels in very early Patristic writings. *Prima facie* there are such allusions, or there is at least an appearance of such being intended. Suppose the Gospels to be of later date, and we might explain the apparent allusions to have another reference; but when the Gospels are evidenced to bear something approaching their ostensible date, they hold the field as against any rival authority which might be cited by such early writers, and the allusions have a much nearer certainty.

panied by the most extreme humility, whether the writer is afraid of writing what she would not wish. The question is how Apostles, if they have our present beliefs and feelings towards the Blessed Virgin, can speak (in the Acts) or write (in the Epistles) on the mysteries of Christianity or the devotions of Christians without once mentioning her. Even with no such feelings and beliefs, it is a chance beyond credibility that there should be no mention at all.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MOTIVE OF THE OMISSIONS

THE truth is, the sceptics do not state the case in its full enormity. Let us have it so stated. We must take a long time seeking for a solution, and make many false detours, if the truth is kept back. On the other hand, it is possible that the very enormity suggests some solution, when we have the full facts before us. Truthfully presented, it is not an ordinary case, to be treated with an airy remark that the Virgin is unmentioned because no one knows of her. Even so, by chance, by coincidence, it is inconceivable that Mary's name should not appear somewhere in these several writings, that the writers who wrote of our Lord's death should never inadvertently allude to His being born into the world. It is not, then, that the writers fail to mention our Lady, but that they shun it; the omission belongs not to some, but to all; it is done on purpose, it is agreed upon, a common understanding, whoever writes any one of the Epistles included in the Canon of the New

Testament. Hostile criticism only observes that our Lady is left out. That will not do; she is *kept out.*

Meanwhile we know of nothing in the dispositions of the writers that should induce them to ignore Mary. On the contrary, from the Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. Luke it seems legitimate to infer that mention might be made of her, and even that the disposition of the Apostles would be to pay her due distinction.

There is here a direct contradiction. On the one side the exclusion of Mary's name from the writings; on the other the entire absence of any motive for it in the disposition of the writers. The logic, then, is clear. There must be a motive for the exclusion, and the motive must lie elsewhere than with the writers.

The writings of the New Testament are Scripture, and all Scripture is by inspiration (2 Tim. iii. 16); the sacred writers were guided by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21).

Canonical writers controlled by their inspiration.

Inspiration is not a haphazard affair, so that an Epistle is inspired because the Church decided to have it so, and placed it in the Canon. The letters an Apostle wrote under inspiration were so written to his own consciousness, otherwise than the hundreds of other letters that he wrote of his own motion.

## *THE MOTIVE OF THE OMISSIONS*

Let anyone read the fourteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and understand, at any rate, so much.[1] The creed of the Christian Church is not that the prophets spoke by the Holy Ghost, but that the Holy Ghost 'spoke by the prophets.'[2] The language may indeed be that of the writer; it is Hebrew and not Coptic, Greek and not Latin; the message is given in the form familiar to its medium, whether linguistic idiom or expression or phrase or even topic—an inspired writer is not commissioned to write of things wholly unfamiliar to him and beyond his knowledge—but the message, the thing spoken, is divine. Balaam (Num. xxiv. 13) must speak the words that are put into his mouth, and an inspired writer must write only—or woe betide him—the words that are given him to write. St. John uses, by inspiration too, terrible words: 'If any man add to the words of this prophecy, God shall add to him the plagues that are written here' (Apoc. xxii. 18). The particular medium is chosen, and he is chosen, among other reasons, as being faithful to his witness, to his inspiration. The exclusion, the absolute exclusion, of Mary from all but the Gospel records, is done by God Himself.

[1] The celebrated texts 1 Cor. vii. 6. 10, 12, 25, 40, may be also studied.

[2] *Φίλον τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ.* 1 Pet. i. 11.

There are three things, wrote St. Ignatius (*ad Ephes.*), three mysteries, that were done in 'a silence of God'—the Virginity of Mary, the Nativity in the Stable of Bethlehem, the election of the Cross of Calvary (John xii. 32, 33). This silence, as relating to the Virgin-Mother, is still observed by the divine counsels. If God speaks, let the whole earth be silent before Him (Ps. lxxvi. 8; Zech. ii. 13). If God speaks. But who, then, is he who shall dare to break in upon a silence of God?

The unrevealed in Revelation.

However, such reticence in the divine communication, such hiatus in inspired record, the unrevealed in Revelation, is no isolated phenomenon. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has many an unwritten page. Let us reflect how many things in the human life of the Son of God, things that we should have wished to know, things that it imperils our salvation—so it would certainly seem—to have remaining unknown, are nevertheless not recorded, at least such is the appearance to our imperfect vision—the entire instruction, to take a capital instance, of the Forty Days after the Resurrection; the instruction on which the Church was principally built and the Christian faith elaborated; the instruction of the promised time, when our Lord was no more to speak to His disciples in proverbs but would show them plainly of the

Father (John xvi. 25); the instruction from whence proceeds the Apostolic *tradition*, the Divine tradition, which is the possession of the infallible Church, and of the infallible Church alone. How many controversies, to our human apprehension, might have been avoided if we had chapter and verse for the whole of the Church's tradition? 'He spoke to them of things that concerned the kingdom of God' (Acts i. 3). But no; we must not learn the Creed by our own critical appreciation, but by submitting to be taught (Rom. x. 2, 3). Such is the divine dispensation for us. Or again—a much smaller thing, perhaps, but still—if we only knew what Lazarus *said*, a traveller returned from the bourne! No undiscovered country then, we think. But God knows better. 'Neither will they be persuaded though one come back from the dead' (Luke xvi. 31).

One may safely judge, besides, that there are things too sacred for literature, to be abandoned to our profanity. As, for example, hardly any word spoken by our Lord, only six words in all (Mark v. 41; vii. 34; Matt. xxvii. 46), are allowed to come down to us. The confusion, the terrible condemnation, if we could take in our profane mouths the actual speech of God Incarnate!

So that there have been often in Scripture, often no doubt also in life and in the events of

this or that succeeding century, things withheld, which seem to our inexperience as if they would have been good things, but they are even then withheld because of greater harm otherwise; or the rhythm of the universe might have been disturbed by their inclusion. We do not know. It is impossible for us to penetrate to the mind of God (Rom. xi. 34). In the moral order, as in the physical, we must accept catastrophes without understanding them. In the spirit of Job (ii. 10): 'Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?' It is a disappointment to find nothing about our Lady, to have nothing beyond constructive proof (though it is more than constructive in the case of the two Evangelists themselves who record the Birth of Christ) of the reverence and devotion we pay her to-day having been also paid by those who knew her and had seen her. Mary is the destroyer of heresies, in the sense that to discover her and to be won to revere her is more than half-way to the bosom of the Church. What a grand thing, to our inexperience, if we had it actually recorded of the first Christians that they repeated, as it has been shown[1] that they certainly might have repeated, the Hail Mary! Or if the Assumption was not only to

[1] Above, p. 31. But in that case Protestants would expunge the text, as many now expunge 1 John v. 7.

be found in the *Transitus*, but named or alluded to somewhere among Apostolic writings! Where would at least Protestantism be, would it ever have been, then? How many souls now lost for lack of it! So it appears to our incomplete vision and narrowness of view. 'We see, as in a mirror, but the imperfect reflection and image; we know only a part' (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Yet something we may perhaps discern.

The reason of the Assumption—as David sang: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption,' and the words were applied by St. Peter to the Son of Mary (Acts ii. 31); or, as our Lord Himself interpreted the law: 'Whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him that dwells therein' (Matt. xxiii. 21)—the reason of the Assumption taking place is, perhaps, also the reason, or one reason, of our missing it, and other things of like sacred import, from any divine communication. Mary is holy, she has been the shrine of the Holy One—*Deum de Deo, Lumen de lumine, gestant puellae viscera*[1]; she abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

Mary's sanctity withdraws her from our knowledge.

Even by our unaided judgment and intelligence we can understand that it is the glory of woman not to be spoken of (Thuc. ii. 45). What nature

[1] 'True God of true God, true Light of true Light, lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb.'

teaches is so ordered by the Author of nature, who is also the Author of Revelation. We can less understand the glory of the religious, of the nun, presented as a pure virgin to Christ, enclosed in a religious solitude. The one supreme among women, dedicated to God by the threefold tie of child and wife and mother, what must not her seclusion be! Unknown, unheard of, a life without incident and without record. Or the Mother of God left childless? Who is to share her mourning or her memories? In the narrative of the Incarnation it is unavoidable that she should be presented to us. But nothing more. In the Gospel, if a glimpse of her is seen besides, it is only to inform us that she is hidden. 'What have I to do with thee, Madonna?'— 'Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?' —'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the breasts that suckled Thee. Hush! no; blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.' 'I have nought to do with thee here, in the public gaze; My mother is different, separate from the nearest of My disciples, not to be named as they are named. What if she heard the word of God first in her Annunciation, what if she kept every saying about Me or speech of Mine, pondering it in her heart? I died, and she stood beneath My Cross. I rose and appeared to My disciples, but if I appeared to her, it shall never

be known. Enough; I left her as My last legacy, in My dying agony, My last charge. I left her to My beloved, to all who are Mine, to be their Mother, as she was My Mother. The rest is faith. You believe in God; believe also in Me, and if you believe in Me, believe also in My Mother.'

Of our Lord it is written (Mark vii. 37): 'He hath done all things well,' in His providence as in His miracles of mercy. Dimly, as in a glass, a blurred and broken mirror, yet see we do that what has been done is best. Blessed are the poor, the persecuted, the meek—that is God's order, not our way. Blessed the pure in heart who see God. Blessed Mary above all, the Virgin of virgins, the pure Virgin. She shall be known best, not by record, but by the silence about her. *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.* Left out of the record, left to God!

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

INSPIRATION is a reality. 'The Breath of God blows where He wills.' 'It is the Spirit who testifies.' Language and expression belong to the writer, but the things written are not his own; they are things given to him to write, and he may not, he dares not, diminish or add to them. That is the manner of authorship of Holy Scripture. 'All Scripture is God-inspired.' The explanation regards, among other things, the things that are written, and the things that are left unwritten, in Scripture about our Lady, the mention or the total exclusion of the name of Mary. Nevertheless it may now appear that the silence of Epistolary writers, though due to the divine control, was not out of accord with their natural disposition; there need be no strain or irksome curb in this respect over the human medium. Of themselves, and Inspiration apart, it might always be an understood thing among the Eleven, among the early disciples, that

Natural reticence of Epistolary writers.

nothing should be said about Mary beyond her simple identification in the Gospel. Why should they say more? They could not foresee of themselves that her prerogatives would be rejected in our far-off time, that there would arise a generation long after them too dull to understand what was meant by being the Mother of the Only-Begotten; they could not anticipate that dishonour should ever be done to her with a pretence of jealousy for His honour whose infant kisses were hers. They had not a mysterious consciousness, it was a very obvious and natural feeling, against talking about her. Obvious, while they were treasuring her, in her loneliness, in her patient waiting, wherever the abode might be. Not less obvious, when she was gone from them, when she was crowned in heaven, when her holy body had gone to that place where 'bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh'[1] was already gone before. She had been a mother to them. Who talks of his dead mother? And if his mother was more holy than the holiest memory that we can picture? It was their mission to preach Christ, and they could not preach Him without preaching her so far. But they had nothing further to say; they had no instruction, no commission, to say more.

[1] Not merely Gen. ii. 23, but xxix. 14, etc.

They could not, with their recent recollection, tell their converts to love Mary. Those who learned to love their Saviour, must find out for themselves that His Mother was also theirs. And the confidence that this would come about was not mistaken. The earliest theological history is a logical process towards the definition of her queenly estate[1]; the earliest writers, an Augustine of Hippo, an Ephrem the Syrian, expound her glories. Things defined, as every student of ecclesiastical history knows, are things current in the Church long before; they are not defined in order that they may be believed, but because the existing belief has, at the particular time, begun to be questioned. When was it, then, since the first age, that Mary was not the object of the devotion of Christendom; when was it that the devotion was not a growing and expanding thing, and therefore the root, the plant, already there? We should have no prepossessions, we should reflect, we should be reasonable, we should try to understand. What are the facts, what is the evidence, not as we thought it was, but as it is really found to be? 'That is not what we believe.' But, surely, anyone would wish to know what the thing he believed was, whether *ens* or *non-ens*. To believe and know nothing about it, not care to know,

[1] Newman, *Development*, chap. iv. sect. ii.

is laughable. People now think it strange, and revealing an unusually subtle disposition of mind, if anyone is dissatisfied. Certainly, within the Church, doubt is excluded because of the Revelation, and the Church affirms what is affirmed here. But outside the Church, where no Revelation is possessed, where everyone must judge and decide for himself, how, if you do not judge and decide, can you call it believing? Are you so simple as to take for Gospel what you learnt at school? Or what 'most people think'? Look into things for yourself, and you will see that you were told all wrong, and people in general are hopelessly wrong, about primitive Christianity and the religion of the Bible, so far, at least, as concerns rejection of the office and dignity of the Mother of God.

Where the argument is now arrived, it is difficult to get back to the puerilities of our beginning, when some difference was allowed and some explanation appeared suitable regarding the position of the Blessed Virgin in Holy Scripture and in the Christianity of the first age; when there was a serious suspicion about the literary and archæological enterprise in hand, and yet possibly some indulgent interest and curiosity, as when one expects an ingenious piece of reasoning and an impossible paradox to be maintained. All that

Cogency of the preceding argument.

is now left behind. And yet, retrace the steps of the argument; where is the flaw? There is not any debate or real discussion introduced, no contravention imagined or assertion maintained; it is only that the language of Scripture is noted and as it were underlined, so that it shall not escape attention. Observe also that it is the language of Scripture. Only one reference —that concerning the Assumption—to any other authority, and the Assumption may be left out of the evidence without any great difference in the issue.

It is untrue, then, that our Lady is passed over in the Gospel. You arrived at that idea by leaving the Nativity and its prologue out of your purview. It is untrue that the honours of our Lady belong to a later age. They are ascribed to her by St. Matthew and by St. Luke; they belong to the age of St. Matthew and of St. Luke. Or, if not, they belong to an age lying side by side with it, so that its furniture is the same, moved just as it stood from one room to the other. The Gospels *may* belong to the Apostolic, and *must* (by confession of the critics) to the sub-Apostolic age. Protestantism means, beyond error, incapacity.

How did it come to make the muddle? How did it come to leave our Lady out, when the Gospels put her in? And to say the Gospels left

her out? The English Protestant Established Church has had of late a leaven of better notions. It is always perhaps a less extreme Protestantism, because of its retention of Bishops and Cathedrals, and because of its preservation of mutilated Office and Liturgy, links of language and institution with the former Church of the land. In an authorised and widely used hymn-book of the E.P.E.C., there was included the *kyrielle* of a famous writer: 'Jesus, Son of Mary, hear.' The refrain was editorially metamorphosed into 'Jesus, Son of David.' Not even in the E.P.E.C., can our Lord be allowed to be the Son of Mary. But the Gospel allows Him to be. If He is, we must not say so; it is Mariolatry, and displeasing to God. But the Gospel does say so. Either it is not Mariolatry, or Mariolatry is not displeasing. Protestantism is anyhow wrong and cannot possibly be right.

Protestant lack of lucidity.

Supposing the Catholic devotion to Mary to be immoderate, to exceed due bounds, to have become a limitless hierurgical system, bordering on idolatry, or over the border. Still the devotion is there, whatever it may be. And the devotion was in the sub-Apostolic age, in primitive Christianity. Not in Protestantism.

If we could find an ordinary level-headed man, might he not therefore reasonably argue: 'No;

Protestantism is clearly wrong here; there is an obvious *lacuna*. With the *lacuna*, and with the error, how am I to take the Protestant account of what in particular the devotion is outside Protestantism? Not having got the right version, having itself no version at all, how can Protestantism assert that outside version to be wrong? You want to get your line from the primitive age under this head. There is certainly a start in the Gospel. Now here in Protestantism the line breaks off short. There in the Church it is still traceable. Or at any rate there is a line. And why not then the primitive? You have no position for denying it. Because at first you denied that there was any start in the Gospel, any primitive line, at all. And as you had missed that altogether, I cannot now recognise your qualification for deciding what sort of line it properly is. I shall—reasonably, I think—take the Church's devotion as my point of departure, as at present holding the field. You must discover for me how and where it is wrong. It is not wrong *ab initio* as not being your devotion, because you have got no devotion, and are convicted besides of yourself being wrong without one.'

There is no development in our age—no substantial development—from the belief and attitude of the first age. What suggests the idea,

what, perhaps, sets Protestantism also wrong—though it should not, considering that Protestantism asserts 'the Bible only' and does not regard tradition or ecclesiastical record—is a temporary subsidence of the outer radiations of the Christian creed during the age of the Martyrs, during the persecution under the Roman Empire, which began before the close of the first Christian century. The central nucleus alone, the vital and essential dogma, all else unlearnt, such an Apostles' Creed as that of St. John (1 John v. 5–11) or of St. Paul (1 Tim. iii. 16), sufficed for the inchoate and embarrassed Christianity of that time.[1] The Church was a fugitive, hiding in holes, hunted down. There was no active ecclesiastical life; it was enough if the immortal spark was still glinting here and there; if unbelief and profligacy and superstition were defied and God adored, the true God, revealed not imagined, God who had become man—*et homo factus est.* 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' said St. Paul to the jailer, 'and thou shalt be saved.' *E contra*, where the Church had freer scope, as in Syria, the devotion to Mary, the language employed about her, retained the expression of the Apostolic age

The witness of early Patristic literature.

[1] The tendency of persecution is, however, the same in any Christian century. Thus in a distant Scotch county, even to-day, the indigenous Catholics refuse the Rosary in their devotions.

as exemplified in the Gospels of SS. Matthew and Luke, and a hundred years before the Council of Ephesus, we get the writings of St. Ephrem, as already noticed, equalling or exceeding those of St. Alphonsus Liguori, in their exposition of 'the glories of Mary.'

But, generally, it was a time of distress and struggle, and though the tradition of the Apostles was maintained entire within the teaching Church, yet opportunities of teaching were precarious, and its scope was limited accordingly. There were special considerations besides which kept back some phases of Christian doctrine from the exoteric teaching of the Church within the Roman world. The enemy was not then Protestantism, Deism, Agnosticism; but either idolatry—the adoration of the graven image; or philosophy—the creed of human imagination in place of the Revelation of God; philosophy, with its curious conceits and false spirituality, the 'wranglings of men corrupt in mind' (1 Tim. vi. 5). Hence, on the one hand, as has been often remarked, the absence of images, while still in wall *paintings* the mysteries of Christianity were depicted, and the Virgin and Child (above, p. 38) appeared. On the other hand, the progress of ecclesiastical definition concerned the central essence of the faith, against Gnosticism, Sabellianism, the Nestorian and Monophysite heresies, etc. Nevertheless, even

such progress led directly up to the proclamation of Mary as 'Mother of God' at Ephesus, and her dignity was indissolubly connected with the Incarnation of God, with an article of the Creed, to be refused under anathema.

By the stress of persecution, then, and by the presence of paganism and outlandish philosophies, we are to account for the meagreness of allusion —but there is allusion, though meagre [1]—to the dignity of our Lady and to her devotion in early Patristic literature, if Protestants were concerned with this. Meanwhile the testimony of Holy Scripture and the evidence it furnishes of its own age is unmistakable, and, from whatever period of the Church's emergence to free life and peace, we can look back to the Evangelists' description and recognize the original model as in no respect exceeded. It is no new devotion, but the old devotion recalled, if it is the age of St. Bernard or of St. Alphonsus or our own. The Christian hymn of praise, whenever the Church freely and really lived, was the Magnificat that St. Luke indited for her.

[1] See Justin, *Tryph.* 100; Irenæus, *Haer.* iii. 22; Origen, *Hom. vi. in Luc.* etc.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MODERN ISSUES

THE Blessed Virgin Mary is Defender of the Christian Faith in the sense that failure in recognition of her royalty, denial of her prerogatives and powers, lapse of devotion to her, is surely and certainly a first breach with Christianity itself. It may almost be said to be *petitio principii*, if one attempts to prove our Lady's claim from the evidence of the Gospels, because, along with rejection of her exaltation, the validity of the Gospel narrative is simultaneously impugned, the Inspiration of Holy Scripture is abandoned or explained away. It is true that the early Protestants professed to substitute the infallibility of Scripture for the rule of the Church, and the more earnest and religious-minded among Protestants, down to quite recent years, have made of the Bible a devotional Object; like the Tables of the Mosaic Covenant, it is esteemed that the Bible is written by the finger of God, every word of it belongs to the divine Source of inspiration. So it is still

Application to the Christian Revelation.

with some simple and old-fashioned sectaries. But among the generality no severe and particular reverence can long endure, and Protestantism with the progress of the centuries has protested and doubted ever deeper and more widely. To-day it has given up, or is arguing in favour of such a step being taken—given up all the miraculous portion of the biography of our Lord, His Resurrection and Ascension, His being born of a Virgin Mother. The Gospels, then, which record these things, are unveracious or garbled. And when they are discovered to be untrue in one place, they may be also in another. The Bible needs editing.

So the Christian faith is not now revealed to babes, but waits for the last word of the literary critic. We have no solid ground, no revealed *truth*. The Revelation makes no difference. God is what our moral sense and scientific intelligence allow Him the title to be, and Jesus Christ is not He who was preached by SS. Peter and Paul, who was written of by St. Matthew, but instead He is that particular historical figure which is restored or created by critical insight and the historical sense.

With this, the *dogmatism* of the Christian Faith disappears. If 'behold the Virgin shall conceive' is a mistranslation,[1] or before that an

[1] The Hebrew word translated 'Virgin' is to be for



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interpolation or a mythe, then 'Immanu-El, God-with-us,' belongs to the same context; the Holy Ghost does not especially intervene, there is no angel Gabriel except in painted windows, and the Holy Thing is born in the natural manner of generation and is not the Son of God.

Protestantism is deeply leavened with Socinianism. God is no longer born into the world, coming to His own—*genuisti qui te fecit*[1]—but it is only, at most, some mysteriously exalted presentation of humanity that receives accordingly, or may claim for himself, equally the title of Son of God or Son of Man, and whom His disciples designate as Lord—*κύριος*, nor in so doing necessarily allow him any godship (Acts xvi. 31, etc.).

Thus does ecclesiastical, equally as secular, history 'repeat itself.' If honour is refused to the Virgin Mother, the Babe of Bethlehem presently ceases to be adored; one deviation from the common belief is linked with and implies the other. The Council of Ephesus, in 431 A.D., which declared Mary to be *Theotokos*, Mother of God, was the sequel of Nicaea, 325 A.D., which declared our Lord to be of one Substance with the Father.[2] The Nestorian assigned to our Lord

advanced critics merely 'woman,' and especially a married woman!

[1] 'Thou didst bear thy Maker.'

[2] In that earlier age there were those who called our

a mixed personality, or at least one which was not purely divine; Mary was the mother of Christ, and not of God. If the faith of the Incarnation was to be preserved intact, Mary must have that title which Protestants now refuse her. Protestants refuse it her, and accordingly are infected with Nestorianism in their generation. The late Bishop (Creighton) of London objected [1] to the Christmas hymn which sang 'Glory to the new-born King.' For the Scripture had it 'Glory to God.' We gather, therefore, that to the Bishop 'the new-born King' is not here an equivalent. Protestants have up and down been taught to reject the Immaculate Conception, and the rejection has avenged itself, at least in England, where the Immaculate *Conception* [of Mary] is by nineteen out of twenty Protestants understood to mean the miraculous *Birth* [of her Son] from a Virgin Mother! The faith, then, of the Apostles' Creed—'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary'—is Roman corruption, and belongs to 'Mariolatry.'

Christianity in its modern fashion of dress

Lady Mother of Jesus or of Christ, but who hesitated to entitle her 'Mother of God'; so now our Lord is the Son of God; but if anyone should declare (with St. Ignatius) that 'Jesus my God was crucified for me,' the phrase appears, to forty-nine out of fifty Protestants, both precarious and over crudely conceived.

[1] Sermon preached in Fulham Parish Church, on Christmas Day, 1897.

dispenses with dogma, which has these dangerous implications and associations, and becomes the milk-and-water of charitable advertisement and the altruism of the day. The decadence cannot be denied; it begins, as above exposed, with the excision of the name of Mary from the sacred record and from all religious observance. Hence the vindication of the preceding pages presents itself as a defence of the Christian faith at the point where the main assault is now delivered, and where already serious breach is made; no piece of Catholic controversy, but a defence of the creed which is nominally, and was originally, held in common by Catholic and Protestant alike.

To the claims of the Catholic Church.

But also to establish the superior dignity of our Lady must be the most cogent demonstration of the authenticity of the Church's claims as against Protestantism. It has been pointed out above that, as her dignity is only recognised by Catholics, there must be, at any rate, so much of error among dissidents and of truth in the Church, supposing the recognition to be right and to be traced back into the primitive age. It has also been suggested, as a matter of practical experience, that devotion to the Mother of God is generally attended sooner or later by submission to the Church, while, conversely, any lapse into

heresy and infidelity begins with estrangement from our Lady, or is quickly followed by it.

Protestantism is a religion of ***abstraction***; it rejects all ***mediation***. Sacraments, in its view, are not spiritual ***media***, but signs and symbols, if not corruptions [1]; prayer ***unmediated*** suffices, and the Holy Ghost is given for the mere asking (Luke xi. 13). The souls of the dead, without any ***intermediate*** state, diverge ***immediately*** into the presence of God, or the exterior darkness. There is no ***intercession*** possible across the barrier of death, neither of Saints in bliss for us, nor of ourselves for the souls of our departed. ***Mediators*** are not required in presence of our being God's elect—and this becomes in the sequel that the ***mediatorial*** office of Christ Himself is nothing real, and the ***abstraction*** is complete when we are back in the philosophic deism of pre-Christian times.

Especially the adoration of Saints and Relics was always regarded by Protestantism as a blasphemy. We should pray to God alone, and Him only adore. Catholics (it was alleged) put the Virgin Mary almost on an equality with God. 'More than half the civilised world,' said the late Lord Beaconsfield, 'worship a Jew, and the large majority of those worship also a Jewess.'

[1] 'Grown of the corrupt following of the Apostles. *Articles of Religion*, 1562, art. xxv.

The 'worship' of our Lady is certainly one of three or four salient characteristics (Masses, Fasting, etc.) that distinguish the Church before the eyes of those outside, and if this could be justified and proved consonant with the first preaching of Christianity, it must shake the entire position. Imagine it to be allowed that the Catholic devotion is right, and imagine the endeavour accordingly made to introduce it into Protestant Christianity. It must be like the piece of unshrunk cloth or the new wine that rends the garment and bursts the wine-skins.

Catholic devotion to our Lady has the advantage over other salient characteristics that it does not require to be argued from Scripture, but is itself Scripture. '*Hoc est Corpus meum*'[1]—well, is it necessarily transubstantiation? Why not imagery and metaphor: 'I am the vine, and you are the branches'? But '*Quomodo fiet istud quoniam virum non cognosco?*'[2] and '*Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te*'[3]—there is the Virgin Mother and Bride of the Holy Ghost, absolutely beyond evasion; you can only expunge or ignore the words. This is no irrelevant matter. For although the Bible is not at present so much revered and implicitly accepted by Protestants,

[1] 'This is My Body.'
[2] 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?'
[3] 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.'

it was revered and accepted in the original of Protestantism. On the authority of the Bible the Church's doctrine and institution was to be arraigned. But then, supposing the Virgin Mother and the Bride of the Holy Ghost, Protestantism, at least in its origin, is shown on its own ground to be in the wrong in diverging from the Church as to this particular matter. Ought not this to weaken the position of those who have come out of that original Protestantism (and who of our Protestants, of our free-thinkers, has not ?), whose Christian ideas and prepossessions are derived from it ? *Now* indeed the Church appears to them at fault on other ground altogether, on the ground of reason and intelligence. But they judge her to be so as she appears to their Protestant understanding. Human intelligence is not infallible, nor do we ever make, except indeed by supernatural grace, a *pure* judgment, one without antecedent judgments leading to it and qualifying it. What we think and judge to-day is the psychological consequent of a long train of thoughts, both our own and theirs by whom we are taught and whose dispositions we have inherited. You judge as a Protestant. But, in order to be assured of judging rightly, you require to know how you came to be a Protestant, and how Protestantism came to be. The original divergence out of which you come must be first

approved. Can the stream or any branch of it be sweet water if the fountain is tainted? Can the tree bear good fruit if the original stock was savage? The fruit here is the decadence of Christianity, as observed; the original is variation from the absolute word of the Gospel, and that when the Gospel was the authority proclaimed.

If Holy Scripture, if the Apostolic tradition, be so, then what in particular is the honour paid to our Lady by the Church to-day—whether a divine honour, or only of the kind we pay to an earthly sovereign, or to those of higher spiritual and moral endowment among our friends—this is no material matter. If there is some honour to be paid, if our Lady, though a creature, is the acme of creation, and though a woman, the supreme human personality, then, whatever the Church may be, Protestantism must revise its constitution; the demand is not for reform but for the referendum.

As above said, the decadence of Christian faith, dogmatic faith, is undeniable, not only in our own country, but perhaps in others still more. The late Pope Leo XIII. advocated, for reparation of the mischief, that appeal should be made to the intercession of the Mother of God, and that increased devotion should be displayed in her service. We live

And to social morality.

in a fool's paradise if we suppose for a moment that with the decay of religion social morality can remain. Human nature is corrupt, and needs the assisting and restraining power of divine grace. Even Voltaire saw that if no God existed it would be necessary to invent one. To the discerning eye there is already evident amongst us the emergence of pagan vices.

Social morality is more the work of women than of men. The mother speaks to the heart of her child while it is still unwritten upon, ere it has known choice or aversion. If 'the child is father of the man,' then each generation depends much for good or for evil on the women of the generation that preceded it. And the influence of good women does not end with the mother's influence. Reverence for good women, association with good women, is for the growing man an amulet against anything sordid and unworthy. If the tone of society is not maintained by women, it cannot be maintained at all; for the man who attempts it is perhaps a prig, or if not, his influence is not the influence of daily contact, of household detail.

Now the freedom and equality of women is the invention of the Christian Church. There is no difference between male and female, as neither between bond and free, in Christ. Freedom and equality did not exist, in any country or race,

in any polity, in any creed, before Christianity, and subsequent to Christianity they are not found outside the Christian Church. In Mohammedanism, for example, women fall back into their ancient degradation. Do you say that Mohammedanism is an Eastern religion, and that this accounts for its difference of institution? So was Christianity, an Eastern religion. It originated among the Jews, and in Judaism there is no equality. Or again. Milton, the noblest, or certainly the most celebrated, of the English Puritans, wrote in advocacy of divorce, and would allow the husband to put away his wife for mere change of fancy and disinclination towards her—without allowing the wife. Many of the earlier, and even of the later, sectaries along with their doctrinal innovations combined some meddling with marriage and the sexual relation. Witness the Albigenses and Utraquists in former ages. In our own time we have some conspicuous examples.

'Set on one side such extreme innovators.' In the more respectable forms of Protestantism it is claimed that the sanctity of the home is especially honoured. But in Protestantism, on the contrary, divorce is a growing evil, and with the liberty of divorce women are necessarily degraded. Or again. The 'rights' of women are advocated along with the extension of free

thought. But this implies a *contention for supremacy* between the sexes, in which women seek to *rule* instead of *being ruled*. The difference lies on the surface.

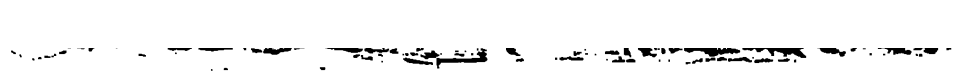
No; freedom and equality were first granted by and in the Church, and subsist wherever and however now in consequence of that original grant. Subsisting outside the Church in consequence, their tenure is still then insecure. But, as regards this feature in Christian civilisation, distinguishing it from all other civilisations of any age or country, it is the merest commonplace, which no ecclesiologist would care to question, that the position attained by women is originally due to that which is held by the Madonna.

It made the difference of Christianity at the outset from the social conditions around. It started the idea in Christianity, which had never been started before, of a womanhood without inferiority. It progressed and disseminated itself through Europe during the centuries in which the Church was supreme and the 'worship of the Jewess' established. It created chivalry, of which only the derelictions are censured. It gave the world Dante's Beatrice, the guide of Paradise. It made romantic art. Spenser and Sidney and Shakespeare in England were because

the Church and the Madonna had gone before, not because the Puritan and the Rationalist were to follow after.

You may speculate, you may theorise, you may experiment (as in Protestantism), but in the historical outcome and in the teaching of experience the sanctity of family life is not maintained without the ideal of virginity beside it. You may kick against any such conclusion, as you belong to the modern age, but you cannot avoid it. No nun, no true wife. The Virgin-Mother, who was the wife of Joseph, sanctifies the three estates of mother, wife, and maid. Home? The first Christian home is the home of Nazareth. Marriage is holy and virginity is holy in the institution of Christ and by the Apostolic regulation. Religion, the religion of Christ, must consecrate both the one and the other. Without religious consecration, celibacy is barren. Without the Sacrament, marriage is debased. 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, to thee I consecrate myself wholly; take me for thy servant, thy handmaid, as thou wast thyself *Ancilla Domini*, the handmaid of the Lord.' Not only for Christianity, for the Church, but also for our society, for our civilisation, for the preservation and progress of our race—the vindication of our Lady's title is no unfruitful work. Happy is that nation,

effective in the world is that people, which is under the patronage and protection of the Queen of angels and of men. At any rate, those who refuse her their homage, and still profess themselves Christians, must clearly be, as Matthew Arnold said, a people wanting in 'lucidity.'



# PART II

## AFTER

# CHAPTER I

## THE GROUND OF DEVELOPMENT

THE Evangelists—and inferentially, therefore, the immediate disciples and chosen Apostles of our Lord, or, at latest, the aftermath of the Apostolic age—regarded our Lady as being Mother of God (Matt. i. 23; Luke i. 35), as being the Blessed Virgin (28, 45), as being *Virgo virginum* (Matt. i. 20; Luke i. 34), as being *Ancilla Domini* (38), as *purissima*, and thence, by suggestion, *immaculata*. At the Crucifixion she is recorded as having been named Mother of the Apostolic Body, and thence of Christendom, *Mater nostra* (John xix. 27); she is commemorated as sharing in the Sacrificial Offering of her Son, *Mater dolorosa*, *Mater condolens* (Luke ii. 35; John xix. 25), and as being associate, with pre-eminent position, of the expectant Church between the Ascension and Pentecost (Acts i. 14). She is expressly and unmistakably declared of high Jewish rank, of the highest. Our Lord was regarded as descended from David (Matt. i. 6; Luke iii. 31;

Summary of evidence of Holy Scripture.

Acts ii. 30), and hence was popularly known, according to the narrative, by the title 'Son of David' (Matt. xx. 30; xxi. 9, etc.), not merely in a metaphorical and purely titular sense[1] as being the Messiah, but His actual genealogy is traced; He is the *de jure* king of Judæa of His age (Matt. ii. 2; Luke i. 32; John vi. 15), and that necessarily —since He has no human father—in His Mother's right, who is therefore of royal blood, *Regina* (Luke i. 27; ii. 4), and so handed down in Christian tradition, and by her relation to God Incarnate transcending the immediate and earthly sovreignty, carrying it to a higher elevation, universalising it; besides *Regina Apostolorum*, therefore, also *Regina Sanctorum omnium*, *Regina Angelorum*, Queen of heaven as well as Queen on earth. For the prophecy of the angel of the Annunciation (Luke i. 32, 33) spoke of her Son: 'The Lord God—Jehovah Elohim—shall give to Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.' The Queen-Mother, of the same royal house, shares in the *eternal* reign of the Heir and Lord of David; when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory

[1] Incontrovertibly so in St. Paul's phrase (Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8): 'Jesus Christ of the seed of David.' St. Paul must be evidence of the belief of his age, which is surely Apostolic.

(Matt. xxv. 31), upon His right hand stands the Queen in gold of Ophir (Ps. xlv. 9; Matt. xx. 23). He that comes in glory, in 'the clouds of heaven,' is the Son of Man (Matt. xxvi. 64), and He is only Son of Man as being Son of Mary.

All this belongs to the Sacred Narrative. A moment, if you please. That it so belongs is no proof of the truth or justice of the estimate—no argumentative proof, as against possible contraveners. Our present bias is sceptical, and the nature of Divine Inspiration, to the few who admit its existence, is not yet ascertained—the idea is still fluid—whether an inspired writing would be accurate in all its parts, or only in some particulars, or not necessarily accurate in any. For large numbers Holy Scripture is only inspired in the sense that it is good and excellent, as a beautiful countenance is inspired, or as an eloquent speech. For large numbers Inspiration is nothing real. That a story or an allegation occurs in a Gospel, is in itself no proof of its being true.

But it is proof of the ideas belonging to the age of composition of the Gospel. Our present bias is historical, and this secondary evidence of original records is particularly favoured. Whether Scripture is inspired, or in some sense inspired, or in no sense, still this proof holds with us all. The ideas a writer expresses are very generally those of his age or of his immediate surroundings,

and, when they are otherwise, it is revealed by the literary manner of their introduction. The writers of the Gospels are not *clever* writers; they are not equal to invention or embellishment of their own. Thus the dignity assigned to our Lady so far must be the concern of the first age; we are dealing with no later development of any sort; we are still on the ground of Scripture and have not started any 'Tradition' in excess or independence of it. It becomes quite syllogistic, as it might be in a treatise of the Schools. After this fashion. You must repudiate the authority of the New Testament writings, in order to deny the dignity of the Blessed Virgin. But, as evidence of the primitive age, you cannot repudiate the authority of the New Testament writings. The dignity of the Blessed Virgin accordingly belongs to the primitive age.

Nature of theological exposition.

The further inquiry concerns the general and current belief within the Church regarding our Lady's prerogative and office. The design is altered. We have not to discover what is the belief and sentiment of the present age, as previously of the Apostolic age. There is no dispute about it. Nor can the Scriptural narrative or discourse be employed as evidence of opinion prevailing so many centuries later. Nor is there anything to prove by evidence. Whether the beliefs are

true and the opinions just, is not the question, but merely what they are. So that they may be compared with what has been ascertained to have been the devotion of the primitive age.

At the same time, these current beliefs of the Church are commonly much travestied by those outside, and unnecessary prejudice is created against them. Even when they are presented with something more nearly approaching accuracy, their effect is misrepresented, exaggerated consequences are deduced from them, and they are made irrational and impossible by false premisses on which the counter argument proceeds. Hence, though no external evidence or proof is to be adduced, the belief respecting our Lady and the devotion accorded her may be examined to ascertain what precisely they are, their internal coherence may be exhibited, and they may be vindicated according to reason and human intelligence, as nothing monstrous or inconsistent with our experience of the nature and constitution of things about us, of the world in which we live, and of the unseen world which is inferred to exist besides. The office of the Blessed Virgin, as conceived by the Church, is discovered not to contradict the order of Providence and the law which God has imposed on the universe of His creation, but to be in complete harmony with the

common beliefs of mankind regarding the one and the other.

We necessarily encounter theological aspects. Theology is an extensive science and runs into collateral branches. It touches upon topics apart from its proper domain. Thus, strictly speaking, the existence and nature of angels has nothing to do with theology; nor has the existence and nature of the future state for human souls. But it would be pedantic to exclude these questions. Much more clearly is the present inquiry a concern of theology. The Mother of God Incarnate cannot be excluded from exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and her name appears as an integral adjunct of the Christian Creed—'born of the Virgin Mary'; the determination of her proper title is associated with the definition of the true faith regarding the Divinity of Christ against the Nestorian heresy.

Then, further, theology is a deductive science. Necessarily so, if the fact is admitted of a Revelation having been made.[1] A deductive science is one that proceeds from first principles which are admitted as necessary truths. But in a Revelation, that which is revealed is true beyond our question.

[1] But in the modern acceptation of the term outside the Church the Revelation does not reveal. On the contrary, we have ourselves to make out with great trouble and contention what Christianity is.

It is less certain that two and two make four, than that 'I and My Father are One' (John x. 30), or that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son' (iii. 16), or that 'the bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world' (vi. 51).[1] The mathematical truth is certain according to the constitution of our minds, but the truths of Revelation are certain apart from us altogether. They are from God. The one is a truth of the present constitution of things; the other is truth eternal. Consequently, if mathematical science is legitimately deductive, if we may unhesitatingly infer that two sides of any triangle are together greater than the third, still more unhesitatingly may we affirm the deductions of theology, supposing them to be true deductions, that is to say, to follow from the theological first principles without violating any deductive canon. If Revelation has revealed nothing, it is not a revelation. But if anything is revealed, we have absolutely certain truths, from which deduction may proceed. Theology is a deductive science.

This is the main ground of what is called development in Catholic theology. Deductive inference, whether in the lucubrations of the learned or in popular native logic, may enlarge

[1] The only *elenchus* would be that these propositions did not belong to the Revelation.

the scope of an accepted doctrine or propose some subsidiary addition to the creed. If you would refute any such development, your business is to show that the doctrine is not legitimately inferred from the data of the original Revelation. To show the doctrine to be uncomely or unreasonable in itself, is to waste your labour. That merely, if the deduction be correct, refutes the original Revelation! But with every fresh definition of doctrine, to be professed under pain of anathema, the Church has always taken special care to discover and to proclaim that the doctrine is of a piece with the received creed. Thus if you do not admit such development, you either do not admit Revelation, or you dispute the validity of reasoning. You might as well or better dispute that two and two make four.

There is, then, a recognisable development in theological doctrine. And belief regarding the Mother of God, and such devotional practice as is consequent on that belief, comes within the province of theology without any great expansion of its boundaries. The Christian Revelation, from which our theology takes its origin, is primarily the doctrine and discipline in the possession of the Apostles of our Lord by His commission. What we discover within the first age of the Church may be understood to belong to the Revelation, to be a

***divine*** tradition, as instituted through that commission. That there is a dignity ascribed to our Lady and a devotion paid her in the first age, has been discovered in the former part of the present work. We have, then, a Revelation regarding our Lady, her office and attributes are part of the Revelation, and we obtain thus a datum for future deduction, as in the case of any article of the revealed creed.

If anyone objects that it is not the traditional institution of the Apostles, but the written Scripture, which is the Revelation, at least as far as it exists for us at this date; though the objection is demonstrably invalid;[1] yet, even then, we may observe that the evidence for the belief of the first age regarding our Lady, for the Apostolic institution, has been obtained from Scripture. We may rest the argument on either interpretation. Is the Scripture inspired, and does that imply that it is divine and infallible truth? Or is the Apostolic tradition that with which we are concerned, and is the evidence of Scripture adduced to substantiate that a particular belief regarding our Lady belonged to the first age? In either

[1] We desire—and it is evidently the safest course—to approach the knowledge of Christianity in the mode of the first converts. But this is evidently by Apostolic tradition and not the consultation of texts.

case we have our revealed and certain data, and theological science, as applied to our Lady, becomes legitimately deductive. There is a legitimate development in the doctrine and belief of the Catholic Church regarding the Queen-Mother.

## CHAPTER II

### DELEGATION OF THE DIVINE DOMINION

THE general government of God appears to be conducted by delegation of power. In the physical world there is thus the appearance of self-evolution, of a machinery set in motion and working thenceforward by its own forces and according to the law of its original construction. In the ordinary course the Creator does not interfere. 'God makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.' That is to say, the forces of nature operate uniformly, and their action is indiscriminate. The most valuable life may be struck down by the earthquake or the pestilence, while the worthless life escapes. There is dissolution and recomposition in a regular rhythm. The mouldering of the slain upon a battle-field enriches the soil, and from more luxuriant crops more life is fed. There is nothing lost and nothing added; the same original elements decompose and reunite by their own impulses, by their intrinsic attrac-

Delegation to natural forces.

tions and repulsions. The material of the earth's *entourage* is constant and only alters its form; the sea recedes on one shore and encroaches on another; in order that an additional entity may emerge upon the globe, there must somewhere be a gap made.

So complete is this delegation of power that the great natural philosophers of antiquity—and the disposition of modern science is largely the same—discovered in the uniformity of natural law a proof that there were no gods at all, or, if any gods existed, that they did not concern themselves with the world in which we live. The most complex processes go on, the most marvellous evolutions are effected—the acorn becomes an oak, the granite rock grows, Alps are piled on Alps—by internal forces, and without any impulse or interference beyond the forces themselves. The mystery of life itself is hidden in the secret of nature's alchemy, the mystery of revolving orbs, and the transit of a thousand years of the light of distant stars. God has given nature powers, and these are left alone to direct, control, and govern.

To man over nature.

Further, it did not need the direct teaching of Scripture (Gen. i. 26, 28; Ps. viii. 6)—unless, indeed, for the silliness of some human philosophies—to inform us that man holds a certain supremacy and exercises some

kind of dominion over the earth, and over the life upon it. By his natural intelligence he turns the wilderness into a garden, and impenetrable forests become homesteads and villages; he cultivates fruits and tames animals for his use and profit; even the physical forces serve his will; wind and water turn his mills; hydraulic power, steam, the electric current, work for him. Nature is dependent upon him for life and happiness. Where the human dominion is intelligent and conscientious, the earth wears a smiling face; where man neglects his part, there is rankness and swamp and pestilence; even the climate is changed by clearing of the forest growth; even the creatures that serve him for food live a span of life they would not else have had, cattle upon a thousand hills are happy and tended. The misery in nature, 'red in tooth and claw,' if we are to believe the Revelation, belongs likewise to human responsibility. Evil entered into the world through man's original fault, evil and suffering and death (Gen. iii. 17; Rom. v. 12), and the expectation of the creature is waiting for the restoration of original justice (viii. 19, foll.). Over the earth man is God's vicegerent.

Then, again, within the human race itself some are superior to others and the one exercises dominion over the many. Rank is conceded and government is administered. Not only

civil government, but moral also, left to human discretion. The moral law is enforced in communities; the law is the law of God, but He does not Himself put it into operation; God does not govern us directly, but through governors from among ourselves. The dominion of a man over men is 'ordained by God' (Rom. xiii. 1). The king is 'the figure of God's Majesty, His captain, steward, deputy elect.' You do not end kingship because you have done with kings. You must alter human nature before you can get equality, before you can do away with the distinction between rulers and ruled, before you can abrogate difference of class, the superior and the inferior in intelligence, in force, in craft. But human nature is according to God's design; the rule and order which belong to His Mind, He delegates to the human creature when He thus creates him. 'The rule of many is not good; let one be lord.'

And to man over his fellows.

When we acknowledge all this various delegation of dominion, no one supposes that it derogates from the honour of God, or diminishes His glory. No religious man is shocked when I speak of an avalanche destroying a village or of a vessel being overwhelmed by a storm. We make a garden rose, a British Queen strawberry, a pointer dog—things which would not exist

Delegation no irreligious idea.

except for our intervention; we dam back the ocean and create the little continent of Holland. It is not regarded as profane to speak of such things being done. The judge condemns the criminal, the general issues his order of the day; and no one says, whatever his creed, that the community or the army put judge or general in the place of God. Ordinary observation and experience are concerned. What we see about us, what impression we obtain, we express in ordinary language.

But this is not the end. The delegation which we observe in our experience of nature, exists also beyond nature. On the word of Holy Scripture, we may notice, there exist distinctions of rank in the other world equally as in this. And what information have we, apart from Revelation, regarding the other world, the supernatural world, at all? What is taught us, what the Revelation declares, we must accept as it stands; we cannot correct it—we have no data on which to do so—regarding the unseen universe. Angel, then, we are told, is set above angel; there are archangels; there are 'thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers'; 'one star differs from another star in glory' (1 Cor. xv. 41); Michael is 'the chief of the prince-angels' (Dan. x. 13). The Apostles of our Lord in the future life are to

Delegation in the courts of heaven.

'sit upon twelve thrones' (Matt. xix. 28, etc.); in the parable one faithful servant receives 'authority over ten cities,' another over five, and there is necessarily something correspondent in the reality which the parable is designed to express (Luke xix. 17, 19); blessed is the faithful and wise steward whom his Lord when he comes, as Christ comes at the end of the world, shall find doing his Lord's commands; the Lord shall make him 'ruler over all his goods' (Matt. xxiv. 47). Even in the immediate Presence, round about the great white Throne, where is adored the All-Wise, the All-Present, the Almighty, King of kings and Lord of lords, that was and is and is to come, even there He delegates the exercise of His sovereignty, He has viceregents and servants who bear rule. Dominion by divine right, is not confined to this world; God in His own court does not rule directly but by delegation of power, as in our visible universe. There is no Democracy in heaven; reserving the supreme over-ruling Sovereignty of God, still beneath it there is no equality; or if there is equality, if the State is Democratic, there are at least Officers of the Purple and Thegns;[1] there are those who occupy higher rank and who

[1] 'Their distinction [that of the Thegns] rested, not on hereditary rank, but on service done to the King.' Green, *Hist. of the Engl. People*, p. 15.

govern, though with nothing antagonistic to repress or to control; it is a legitimate question: 'Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?' (Matt. xviii. 1).

The argument should be fully seized. In the visible world God rules by delegation. We do not see God; we need not, it would seem, infer His existence. 'The earth rolls round its daily turn and lives its life and ages, all by itself. The sun blazes on, the stars come out and shine by night, new moons succeed, and it seems to require neither hand to create nor eye to watch. With the original atom and with the original force and with the law of evolution, everything goes on its way, and the simple becomes complex, tohu-bohu arranges itself.' The religious man says no; the religious man does not believe this to be true at all. Nor yet that morality is only a branch of sociology, which is again the adaptation of the creature to its surroundings, a more complex physiology. The argument, however, holds thus far—that law and order prevail and continue through the action of natural forces and the properties with which the elements are endowed, and that God does not show Himself; you can scientifically construct the universe without introducing theology, and the religious man who believes in God, believes in Him as

Universality of delegation.

an inference and not as contained in the phenomena; 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork,' because He has left with them the impress of His splendour, because He has delegated to them the operations of His omniscient rule.

All this does not happen so by accident or incidentally. The archetype of this visible delegation—so Revelation informs us—exists in the invisible Heaven of God's immediate Presence. Nature is not so ordered because it is nature, but because it is the creation of God, and because the Mind of God is so. It belongs to God, to His character and disposition—if we may use such words—to rule by deputy, to mediate the glory of His sovereignty. We are not permitted to think of this mediation occurring, so to speak, only in the final terms of the series; so that seed-time and harvest succeed by a mechanical process, but the original formation of earth and water was the direct work of God. Nor that there are delegated powers in the material world, but not in a higher sphere, in the kingdom of grace and of spiritual operation. We ascend from the material to the spiritual, from the wisdom and beauty and order of the created world to the creating, sustaining, and regulating original, and still there is the multiplicity of finite dominion, there glitters

and shows resplendent the secondary sovereignty. *Quando praeparabat caelos, aderam; quando certa lege et gyro vallabat abyssos.*[1] We do not reach the Supreme Majesty, across the 'sea of glass mingled with fire,' without passing through tiers on tiers of Angels and Archangels, of Priests or Elders, of white-robed Martyrs,[2] of regnant Apostles, of mysterious manifold Creatures, of the seven Spirits that surround the Throne; all in their order and degree, doing service and ruling by commission and resplendent in their sovereignty—'a great multitude, like the sound of many waters,' wrote the Apostle; as it were the waves and waves of heaving flame that

[1] 'When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when with certain law and compass He enclosed the depths.'

[2] It is characteristic of the Protestant aberration, as indeed of some of the heresies preceding it, that the Protestant appropriates to himself all the particular glories of the future state which are described in the Apocalypse. He is himself the elect servant, the Saint. He thus misses the notion of any gradation in the kingdom. He is to stand on the sea of glass, harp in hand, and sing the song of the Lamb (Apoc. xv. 2, 3). He is to be one of those who are 'arrayed in white robes,' and whom 'the Lamb shall lead unto living fountains of waters' (vii. 13–17). He is to be sealed among the hundred and forty-four thousand, who are 'without fault before the throne of God,' the *virgin* souls whose glory is revealed to the *virgin* Apostle (xiv. 1–5). It is difficult to explain to anyone who does not at least exclude himself from the last company; it is difficult to explain to the Protestant that as he has no part or lot with the Saints in this life, so in heaven they are chosen *from among* the redeemed and none else share their glory.

shut out from view or vision the central core of the sun.

It must not be mistaken. The analogy of the natural world should be accepted. We should expect to find in the administration of the government of the Almighty always and everywhere a delegation—in any yet unexplored tract, in the higher equally as in the lower, in the supernatural as in the natural. It should not surprise us or put us out of our calculation, if it were so; we should expect it; and, on the contrary, should be startled and find it unaccountable if any other appearance prevailed. Moreover, it is not left to analogical argument, but the nature of the heavenly things is revealed to us, as a mediated sovereignty. The analogy disposes us to believe that it would be so, and we are told that it is so.

Analogy between the earthly and heavenly.

Then the further aspect is this, that as little as the terrestrial government by creatures is conceived to detract from the supreme rule of God or derogate from His Majesty, so little should we suppose that either impiety is done by a similar subordination of authority in the supra-sensible world. 'I am the Lord; My glory I will not give to another' (Is. xlii. 8). True; but, in the sense in which the text is frequently applied, the glory is given to the magistrate, to the rational human intelligence, to the slow

unfailing revolution of an astral system. If one does not even smile but deems it the dullest of pleasantries, when the chance is suggested of the honour paid to the magistrate being a robbery of God, how does anyone assert this of the honour paid to a Saint? That the magistrate belongs to earth and the Saint to heaven, is an irrelevant detail. For if the glory of God is not diminished on earth, it is surely possible that it should not be diminished elsewhere under similar circumstances.

It has been already observed that the government of God nevertheless remains. That is an imperfect expression of the truth. We have to contemplate the insignificance of all delegated dominion in face of Omnipotence. 'Be still, then, and know that I am God.' The ground is the intrinsic transcendence of Infinity, whereas the whole of creation is finite. The difference between a finite power or wisdom or beauty and the infinite, is more than a difference of degree. The fairest of all we have within our ken, becomes in the face of infinite Perfection like the transit of a planet across the sun, a dark spot upon the disc of original light. 'Who among us,' asks the seer (Is. xxxiii. 14), 'shall dwell with the devouring fire?' The heavenly sphere is finite as the earthly and has no better title. The angel of

The autocracy of God untouched.

the Apocalypse forbade St. John to worship before his feet: 'I am thy fellow-servant; worship God.' There were the two terrible occasions, the first of them never forgotten by the Jewish people, when the waters of the Red Sea were driven back: 'The waters saw Thee, O God, and were afraid; the depths were troubled' (Ps. lxxvii. 16). And the other occasion, the black night upon the Sea of Galilee, when Christ stood up in the boat and told the wind and rain to stop, and there was peace. 'The Lord sitteth upon the flood; the Lord remaineth a King for ever' (Ps. xxix. 10).

The exercise of human power and sovereignty, how great soever, is small indeed in presence of the Empire of the universe. The great monarch of the ancient world is in a moment reduced to helplessness, for his own behoof indeed, and that he may learn to know himself: 'Till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men' (Dan. iv. 25)—not Nabuchodonosor even in this world, but God's sovereignty alone is real. That is the nature of the earthly delegation. And there is no need to suppose delegation elsewhere to be of another character. The great king has his head higher than the heads of others who walk upon the globe, but that does not make him any less one of the fantoccini.

And yet, so much being granted, there is this delegation and the delegation is real. The power of Caesar is to be dreaded, and the fury of the storm; Ajax, who defies the lightning, gains merely a statue's pose. The delegation exists in the spiritual and supernatural region, and there also God's sovereignty is not for a moment impaired. If God rules in the kingdom of men, He rules equally in the kingdom of Saints and of Angels.

The Blessed Virgin is represented in the record of Redemption as exalted above every other creature. Man was created a little lower than the angels, and then later crowned with glory and worship (Ps. viii. 5; Hebr. ii. 7) by the Incarnation, which reverses the previous order of dignity. Our nature, being thereby united to Deity, becomes supreme. But the Blessed Virgin, as having been chosen to be the Mother of God Incarnate, is obviously the highest attainment of humanity. Above every creature therefore; above angel and archangel. If God delegates power to His creatures, the highest and pre-eminent rule under God must belong to her. She is the Queen.

Delegation to the Mother of God.

The Queen of Heaven holds her sovereignty on several titles. She is the Mother of God, the chosen instrument by whose mediation the

union of human nature with Deity should be consummated. She is the holiest of the nature thus exalted, the most perfectly in accord with the Mind of the All-Holy—a higher title even than the other. Blessed it is to be Mother of God, but more blessed still to do the Will of God (Matt. xii. 50) and to hear the word of God and keep it (Luke xi. 28). Mary submitted herself wholly to the will of God—'be it done to me according to Thy word' (i. 38); she was from her first Conception, on to her virgin Dedication (i. 34), to her Annunciation and her Dolours, immaculate. As was written of an ancient servant of God—'in all this Job sinned not' (Job i. 22). Further, the doctrine received is that 'if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him' (2 Tim. ii. 12); 'no cross no crown.' A doctrine received, the spoken word of Christ. 'Are you able to drink of My cup' (Matt. xx. 22), if you would sit on my right hand? Mary suffered *with* her divine Son in a literal sense, as only two or three besides—*stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem.*[1] She suffered more intensely than any other, beyond the pains of all martyrs—*cujus animam pertransivit gladius* (Luke ii. 35). Lastly, *Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum* (Matt. v. 3)—the *first* beatitude; and whosoever humbles

[1] 'The sorrowful Mother stood beside the Cross.'

himself shall be exalted (xxiii. 12). Mary, spite of her divine election to a transcendent dignity, was *ancilla Domini—Respexit humilitatem Dominus ancillae suae.*[1] Therefore the kingdom of heaven belongs first to her of all disciples, and she is exalted as her Son was exalted (Phil. ii. 9) above every name that is named in heaven or on earth, having humbled herself and become obedient to sorrow, the sorrow of the Cross.

Meanwhile, what in particular this delegation is, what it covers, where it stops—just as one might ask the question within the finite limits of earthly dominion—there may be light shed upon such questioning through succeeding pages, at any rate as our Lady is concerned, and under some aspects of her dominative power.

[1] 'The Lord hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.'

## CHAPTER III

### MARY QUEEN

MARY is Queen of Saints—*Regina Sanctorum omnium*. From the Church upon earth veneration and devotion are due to her above every other. But the Saints have their office and prerogative power also in heaven—'Take thou authority over ten cities' (Luke xix. 17). In heaven their intercession is effective. The voice of the Martyrs—a loud voice—cries: 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?' (Apoc. vi. 10). 'Shall not God,' our Lord Himself inquires, 'avenge His own elect who cry day and night to Him?' He assures us: 'I tell you'—no lesser authority—'He will avenge them' (Luke xviii. 7, 8). The patronage of Mary is in virtue and power beyond all other patronage. In heaven her rank may be understood in a literal sense as Queen; her patronage is royal patronage. Do not let anyone (once more) object that God is highest in heaven. So is He supreme on earth. But there is still government on earth and royal

power besides the power of God. So is there such government in heaven. God created both heaven and earth, and what He has ordained for the earthly condition, He may certainly have ordained similarly for the heavenly. God is Creator and Ruler and final Consummation of things on earth and of things in heaven. Yet on earth there is King and Emperor and Pope. And in heaven Mary is Queen, and all are her subjects, all Saints in glory, all Angels, all Potencies and Instrumentalities.

Christians hold that all the gifts of God come to us through Mary. This is an inference from the recognition of her high place and prerogative in heaven, as above described. The inference can hardly be refused, unless its premisses are materially false, and the premisses belong to all the preceding pages. 'God,' wrote St. Paul (Rom. viii. 32), 'who spared not His proper Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also, with Him, give us all things?'[1] God gave us His Son by Mary.

Mary the Channel of Grace.

A maxim of English law declares the sovereign

[1] The Vulgate has *donavit*, 'has given,' but all the Greek texts χαρίσεται, 'shall give.' We may presume the error of a copyist, and then the change of but one letter—*donabit*—brings the Latin into accord with the Greek, while it requires a much greater change to bring the Greek into accord with the Latin. 'Shall give' is therefore pretty certainly right.

to be the fountain of honour. So is Mary the Channel of Grace in Catholic belief. The belief must necessarily rest upon testimony, and its validity cannot be matter of our own knowledge, as the supernatural world is beyond us. The *ground* of the belief is, however, discovered in the records of the Apostolic or sub-Apostolic age, in which the Mother of God was given an exalted place, as argued in the former Part, and the ground is thus an Apostolic tradition. It may even be a Divine tradition. The transcendent grace and dignity belonging to Mary comes immediately from the Apostolic doctrine and belief into the evangelical narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke. Or, yet earlier, her veneration appears as a last instruction of our Lord in St. John (xix. 25–27).[1] An Apostolic or Divine tradition, then, this ground, and we cannot refuse to recognise the transcendent dignity of Mary or to pay her veneration without formal heresy; we should thereby deny her to be, or should not venerate

[1] If the charge is given to the sole Apostle present as representative, then the whole of Christendom is concerned. But even if it is given to St. John personally, there is veneration inculcated, if only on him—'Behold thy Mother.' For the relation of parent to child is determined by the Mosaic law and especially insisted upon by our Lord (Mark x. 18, 19; Matt. xv. 4–6). If veneration was enjoined upon St. John, it would not be wrong and it might be intended that others should adopt the same devotion. Veneration of Mary is not left unregarded, and is enjoined in the particular instance.

her as being, Mother of God. So much for the ground of the belief.

But the belief itself, the inference that all the gifts of God come to us through Mary, is perhaps only an Ecclesiastical tradition,[1] and as such not necessary to accept for salvation. An Ecclesiastical tradition. If so, it is very likely the largest and most illustrious of Ecclesiastical traditions, and it has a special interest. It furnishes a lucid example of the bearing and particular authority of this kind of tradition, and of the proper relation we should hold to such.

Anyone, then, might be a Catholic Christian and might attain salvation, without acknowledging this supreme effective sovereignty of our Lady. That would be the doctrine and theory of the matter as defined in the books. But, practically,

[1] Tradition is of three kinds, according to the books; first, Divine tradition, proceeding from our Lord; secondly, Apostolic, proceeding from the Twelve; thirdly, Ecclesiastical, of any subsequent date. Only the two first are of obligation and concern our salvation to accept. The definition of the three species, however, extends their limits. Any Christian doctrine or practice existing among the Apostles, may be presumed to belong to our Lord's teaching—to Divine tradition. Any doctrine or institution discovered in the sub-Apostolic age, may be presumed to be derived from the Apostles—an Apostolic tradition. It is only when we leave (suppose) the second or third century, that what is not earlier discoverable may be merely Ecclesiastical. All this is quite reasonable and distinguished with sound logic, but it needs stating for those who have no knowledge of the books.

such dissident among Catholic Christians would be a *rara avis*. Unless, indeed, he was one who had been imperfectly instructed, or who was not accustomed to reflect upon religious topics, or finally who was somewhat lax and indifferent in his religious life—types, unhappily, which belong to all time; but Christian and Catholic for all that; among those of whom it was said: 'He that is not against us is on our part' (Mark ix. 40); these also 'children of the kingdom,' who are not to be cast out. Otherwise, what is generally taught, anyone is naturally disposed to accept, and having a Catholic devotion to our Lady, it does not appear to him anything strange or unlikely that she should have this prerogative. Suppose, indeed, a theologian, one who in the pursuit of his duty studies this particular question; then he for his part will perhaps conclude that it is an Ecclesiastical tradition; but he will understand what an Ecclesiastical tradition is, and that it is to be received with respect and reverence, though not so absolutely affirmed. Those who are not theologians, are not concerned with questioning the current beliefs. There always will be people who are anxious to be possessed of all kinds of sceptical opinions, or, as they say, 'to have something to think about.' But, even then, it would look to be an unworthy disposition to prefer the person of our Lady as

the field for exercise of such sceptical imaginings. 'To think about' our Lady, or any other matter of the faith, within the terms of the Revelation, is not only innocent but our duty, so far as our capacity extends. The wrong thing is only to reject, or look about for reasons why one might reject, any particular portion of what has been revealed.[1]

The belief, then, that all the gifts of God come to us through Mary, is inferential. At the same time it is greatly supported, if not originally suggested, by practical experience of our Lady's power over the events and circumstances of our world. It would involve a review of all ecclesiastical history through the expired centuries, to illustrate the occasions of our Lady's assistance and prevalence. There have been many Victories of Lepanto. And our Lady is the 'Help of Christians' in other kinds of conflicts also. Appeal is continually made to her; undertakings, enterprises, societies, place themselves under her patronage; the entire life of the Church in so many ramifications is given over to her direction—with the result that the enterprises attain some prosperity, and the Church continues to subsist,

[1] Or even to examine sceptically whether anything which is taught us as belonging to the Revelation really belongs to it. What the Revelation is, must be determined by the living voice of the Church, or else the Revelation is futile and filters away.

not indeed flourishing as human calculation would direct, but flourishing after the manner of God's order, as the weak things are mightier than the strong, and as the meek possess the earth.

The argument is not to be contemptuously dismissed as a fallacy—*post hoc ergo propter hoc.* Under the most varied circumstances, when all other possible factors are different, we have the one condition present, and the same result thereupon achieved. This constitutes the most general form of modern inductive reasoning—the comparison of as large a number of instances as possible of the production of the phenomenon under the greatest possible variation of conditions. The methods which lead to more certain inductions are not very often available. But the most certain method is available in the present instance, what has been called the Joint Method of Agreement and Difference. Not only where the one condition is present and the other conditions are indefinitely varied, there we find the effect; but where the one condition is absent, the effect is absent. Ecclesiastical history is again full of illustration. What has become of the Nestorian Church, once so largely extended over Christendom, which denied the Mother of God? Or to go back still earlier. The Apostle St. John, the appointed son of Mary in reversion, wrote his entire Catholic Epistle to contend—against the

heresy of his age—that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,' in other words, that the Deity Incarnate had a human mother. Only the learned are aware to-day of some expiring relics of Gnosticism. But enough of antiquity. In Protestantism, the residuary heresy of the modern time, there is no recognition of our Lady's sovereignty, and Protestantism, as a version of Christian belief, is dead or dying.

The point deserves notice, because the issue is often misrepresented. Only, it is said, as races and countries have accepted Protestantism, do they display vigour and prosperity, and in lands where the Catholic faith is the established religion, there is to be seen a moral and religious decay. Supposing it were true, yet in Catholic countries there is often present the counter force of infidelity and revolution. Where the truth is living and active, there the antagonism of evil is stimulated to greater energy. Is it Catholic Christianity or a revolutionary spirit that is the source of weakness?[1] Or supposing Catholic Christianity to be in fault, to be really connected

[1] Or it may be, on the contrary, the lack of liberal ideas and institutions. Liberal and Catholic Belgium prospers. In what are classed as Protestant countries, it may only be that the supreme government is Protestant, not all, or even the majority of, the people. In the recent German empire the Catholic element of the population is regarded as of salutary influence.

with failure in the race for wealth and political development, there would still be nothing conclusive. The question regards the kingdom of Christ, not the kingdom of this world. The Teutonic Protestant, particularly the English Protestant, attains success, but not Protestantism. As Protestants attain success, they more and more abandon Protestantism—for blank negation and infidelity. The modern Protestant has forsaken the traditional observance of Sunday, and his teachers offer him an emasculated Christianity, without dogma or creed. But to return.

As recognised in ritual devotion.

The evidence of our Lady's sovereignty, in the history of the Church and of Christian institutions, is naturally repeated, though without record, in the petty experiences of individual lives. It was said above that the matter was beyond our knowledge. But the average Catholic nevertheless is sure; he asserts that he knows. His prayers obtain an answer. It may be observed that the efficacy of prayer is confidently asserted in the Church alone. Protestants find excuse for failure of effect, when prayer is offered, in the universality and persistence of the natural law; the virtue of prayer is rather in the attitude; resignation to the Divine Will is better than fulfilment; the palmary Christian petition, 'Thy will be done,' etc.—very truly, but apologetic none the less.

The Catholic needs no apologetic. He says his Rosary.

The opinion of our Lady's office thus exhibited is, meanwhile, nothing individual or belonging to some few ardent clients. The devotional routine of worship within the Church bears witness to her acceptance of the opinion that all gifts come through Mary. It is a constant *non-sequitur* to external appreciation that when a Catholic is in special need of divine aid, when he is to have recourse to prayer, he is universally recommended to say a Hail Mary. If he were in extreme peril, in face of sudden death, he might invoke the Holy Name, he might ejaculate 'God help me,' but prayer, if he uttered a prayer, would be the Hail Mary at once, as a matter of course, without hesitation, without an idea of anything else. The Hail Mary is continual in devotion; it generally accompanies the Our Father, meaning apparently that the divine model of prayer is still offered to God through our Lady's mediation. 'When you pray, say, Our Father.' Yes, but when we pray, our Lady is to present the prayer—'Pray for us sinners.' Again, the Rosary is a universal Catholic devotion, publicly as well as privately recited, in the Church equally as in the home; and the Litany of Loretto is hardly less frequent in public worship; we seem largely to pray to God indirectly, by proxy; ten Hail Marys for one

Our Father; the Litany barely introduced by invocation of the Most Holy Trinity, and then subsiding into supplication of our Lady alone. In the Greek (schismatic) Church it is hardly an extension, and nothing heterodox to Catholic notions, that every prayer is addressed 'through the Mother of God'—*παρὰ τὴν Θεοτόκον*, instead of the Catholic *per Jesum Christum.*

It is worth while observing that the Greek schism has lasted long in comparison with the life of other aberrations from ecclesiastical obedience or accepted doctrine; spite of its severance from the trunk and of some doubtful or obstinate rejection of doctrinal definition; spite of the disorder generally belonging to any such severed branch through the supremacy of the civil power; spite of what anyone may esteem its condition to be in this the sixth or the twelfth century of its existence. May its preservation be due, inevitably and by a kind of natural law, to its continued recognition of the sovereignty of the Mother of God? Just as in the midst of baleful political conditions a people might remain strong and vigorous through their family life and the national love of home. Or as the utter neglect of sanitary laws does not wreck the strength of a population that retains a traditional preference for an open-air life. The induction suggested above might find here a crucial instance,

or at least one other example to add to those in which the one condition was alone present when all others were varied. For East is East and West is West, and there can be nothing much the same in the archimandrite on the one hand and the ecclesiastic of Latin or Teutonic races on the other.

But the opinion of our Lady's sovereignty and the practice of Catholic devotion, as just described, meets with condemnation from external criticism, and is even regarded with scorn, as a degradation of religion and little better than the superstition of the pre-Christian pagan world. When it is objected, indeed, that with so much praying to the Virgin—and, more than that, with their ordinary language and with the recommendation of priests and pious people—Catholics put the Blessed Virgin in the place of God, it is difficult to deny that this may be so in the sense of the objector. Matthew Arnold spoke of the God of Protestantism as being a 'much magnified man,' and it might be thought that God in the Protestant view was not even very greatly in excess of the human measure. God agrees with the Protestant's opinions, certainly with his religious and moral opinions, and sometimes with his political opinions also; and if anyone is unable to approve of the God presented to him by one particular

The Sovereignty of God apart.

sort of Protestantism, he migrates to another sort, where his ideal Deity is more nearly approached—where God is credited with a justice, a mercy, and a general conduct of the universe such as satisfies the moral judgment of the worshipper. O, yes! It is the God of the Bible that he worships, wherever and with whomsoever. But subject to some Christian editing. Rather the God of the New Testament than of the Old. And not quite as depicted in the New Testament either; not the God of the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt. xxiv. 51, etc.), and certainly not the Almighty who has 'done great things' to Mary. If, then, the Blessed Virgin takes the place of any such anthropomorphic Deity or 'much magnified man,' which human imagination has anywhere or at any time invented, pagan or Protestant or whatever else, it is probably a distinct religious gain. And we might perhaps admit that she has done so in the Catholic Church.[1]

The gain, or one gain, is that there is no imagination or human invention in it. Worshipping the

[1] Newman in his *Development* seems to think that Mary takes the place left vacant by the declaration of our Lord's Divinity at Nicaea—Chap. iv. sect. ii. 8, 10. As if before Nicaea our Lord was not regarded as the Son of God, and as if in subsequent times the Virgin Mother was regarded in religious devotion in any degree as her Son had ever been regarded!

Blessed Virgin would at least be worshipping something outside ourselves. Mary is a real and actual person, on whom God has bestowed extraordinary favour and whom He has raised to high place; God Incarnate yielded her filial obedience (Luke ii. 51), attended to her requests (John ii. 3–10), and she was the object of His dying regard (*ib.* xix. 26). Her power is no doubt very considerable, and she is not a being of our imagination merely. We should nevertheless hardly call it worship. But what reason can there be why we should not pay her reverence, render her devout service, entreat her protection and aid? She is more than our natural earthly mother, to whom we hold some such attitude as that; she is more than the sovereign of our country, whom we are expected to kneel before and to acclaim. Much more than either. But those who believe in the God of Revelation, who is 'a consuming fire' (Hebr. xii. 29)—'Get you up from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment' (Numb. xvi. 45); who is what He is and what He reveals Himself to be—'I am that which I am' (Exod. iii. 14); beyond exegetical or moral judgment, our part only to ask and to be told—'who is He that I might believe on Him' (John ix. 36); and thereupon to 'believe' and to 'worship'—those who pronounce the Catholic *Credo*, one has scarcely patience to explain that

for them not the highest, not the holiest, not the most adorable of human kind can take the place of God, can come within the horrescent circle of Infinity. 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.' Within the ineffable Presence, those who have the grace to attain thither, cast their crowns before the Throne and adore—'Holy, Holy, Holy'; and within our terrestrial atmosphere, the echo is, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and upon earth is none I desire beside Thee' (Ps. lxxiii. 25)—'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ' (Rom. viii. 35)?—'Yea, come, Lord Jesus' (Apoc. xxii. 20).

And undiminished.

Still, if we address the bulk of our prayers to the Immaculate Mother, is it not putting God in the second place, or at any rate not allowing Him the absolute unapproached place that is rightly His? Besides, is it Christianity? We were 'reconciled to God by the death of His Son,' we obtained 'reconciliation' (Rom. v. 10, 11). 'Through Christ Jesus we have access by one Spirit to the Father' (Eph. ii. 18, etc.). And our Lord protests: 'I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you' (John xvi. 26)—not even His intercession needed. Why, then, should we want so repeatedly and persistently to ask the Blessed Virgin to pray for us? We are

invited to 'come boldly to the throne of grace' (Hebr. iv. 16), that is, to the throne of God in prayer. Do we need our Lady's patronage? We are to 'cast all our care upon God, because He cares for us' (1 Peter v. 7). Where is the occasion for her mediation?

The sufficient answer, however, is that Christianity is a Revelation. The Church is custodian of the Revelation, and the Church appoints for us, or allows, our addresses to the Mother of God. Suppose it thus to be the order of God's providence that His gifts come to us through her, we should not honour God more, or render Him better allegiance, by disregarding the rule He has instituted. The argument runs through the whole of Christian worship and devotional observance. There is an appointed order. Not choice for us, but obedience. We are taught by the Divine Word (Micheas iv. 2; John vi. 45); we have a Revelation (1 Cor. iv. 1). The virtue of the Sacraments themselves is by force of their institution. Otherwise could the priest pronounce absolution? Or could the Host be the Body of Christ? If through the abounding charity of God towards us we can do without the intercession of our Lady, we might with as good reason do without the Sacraments on the same plea. In truth the one and the other are alike instituted *media*. The institution, the rule, the Revelation—*that* is

Christianity. We have in Christianity free access to the Father, but then it must be in Christianity, that is to say, according to the Revelation, and while ourselves receiving and not inventing, or even questioning, the doctrine and institution. Christianity is not the rational or illuminated determination of this or that believer for himself, but is that which Apostles ordain as 'the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor. *l. c.*), committing their trust to others specially empowered after them (2 Tim. ii. 2). Those who 'have spoken the word of God' to us, the Apostles of Christ and the succession of their representatives through all ages of the Church, 'their faith we follow' (Hebr. xiii. 7), not anything our own minds make up for us to believe and to hold. But if there is a devotional rule at all, it must be observed in its entirety; you cannot follow the Revelation in one reference, and prefer your own mother wit in another. Our Lord said before He suffered: 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' But also in His agony He said: 'Behold thy Mother.' If the sovereignty of Mary is truly asserted, then we may honour God most by praying to her. Or, at any rate, by neglecting to render her due observance we fail to please God, if even we do not fall under His positive displeasure.

Mary is Queen of heaven and acknowledged

by the Church to be so; prayers are addressed to her abundantly by appointment of the Church, both in public and in private; she is the sole or principal channel of Grace. You cannot get light and heat directly from God, they come from the sun; prayer will not heal the sick, unless you add the advice of a physician; you might pray to God to receive a free pardon, but at the same time it would be well to petition the sovereign. God's Sovereignty is not altered by these things being so. Nor is it by the heavenly things being on a like, though transcendent, pattern.

Prepollence of prayer to Mary.

When the plain case is thus stated, there appears nothing impossible, there appears nothing unreasonable, there appears nothing particularly exceptional, in supposing that invocation of our Lady may be *more efficacious* than direct prayer to God. While this becomes, as is well known, a further scandal to the uneducated religious mind. In the first place it should be observed that no question is thus raised of direct prayer being offered. The ultimate recommendation of Christian prayer is the divine precept: 'When you pray, say, Our Father.' Prayer to God is more than ordained by our Lord; it is presumed, and perseverance in prayer is what He inculcates. 'Pray without ceasing,' St. Paul ordains (1 Thess. v. 17, 18); 'in everything give thanks.' The

Church exists to worship God. The chief act of Christian worship is a copy of that which is offered in heaven: 'They fell down before the Throne and before the Lamb and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever' (Apoc. iv. 10; v. 8). There is no question of prayer, of praise, of worship offered to God, by Christian institution and in the daily devotional practice of the Church. The question regards occasions when choice is open: 'Shall we pray to God, or shall we ask the prayers of our Lady?' Or even: 'Shall we add a prayer to our Lady, will it be better so? Or will the prayer to God be all-sufficing?' *There* is the stress of the disputation. It is no impiety, it is probably true, to argue that it is a greater impetrative power, that it is more efficacious, to prefer or to add the Hail Mary. For 'the powers that exist are ordained of God,' and Mary should certainly be one of the powers existing in heavenly places, as having been chosen to be Mother of God, and as pre-eminently the recipient of God's grace and favour. Would it be more efficacious to present our petitions to God disregarding what He has ordained? If Mary is Queen of Heaven, we must pay her court; it would not be piety but imbecility to fail to do so. If she is the ordained Channel of Grace, it would be the most likely course to expect to receive grace through her. If you want water, you

go to the well, and praying to God will be of little use without.

In the second place—the point is always ignored—whether we pray to God or pray to Mary, there is still petition that reaches the Almighty. Suppose a man of evil life and within his reach a person saintly in character and assiduous in prayer. It may or may not be right if he fancies that the prayers of the saintly person will avail for him better than his own, but it is very natural for him to fancy it, no one would blame him for fancying it, he would not be guilty of impiety or profanity of any kind by having the fancy. He may pray himself, but the more effective—so he thinks—will be when he asks the saintly person to pray for him. Very well; that is the Hail Mary. When praying to our Lady is said to be more efficacious than praying to God, there is not in reality any suggestion of prayer to God being omitted. The only question is whether our Lady's prayers are likely to be more efficacious than mine. Well, I think they are likely.

## CHAPTER IV

### MARY QUEEN; SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

PRACTICALLY the sovereignty of Mary comes to this—at least in relation to ourselves—that, as supreme among Saints and Angels, her patronage is chiefly important for us to possess, and chiefly through her mediation do we obtain any boon or deliverance, of which we have need, within the heavenly domain. In recognising the mediation of Mary we do not put her in the place of her divine Son, who is 'the one Mediator between God and man' (1 Tim. ii. 5), and 'ever liveth to make intercession' (Hebr. vii. 25). Any such suggestion is inarticulate to the ear of the Catholic Church, and represents the Nestorianism which permeates so completely every form of Protestantism; it is the same misconception as when Catholics are said to 'worship' the Virgin Mary. Outside the ranks of Protestantism the objection is not raised by people of ordinary intelligence. Unless through being infected with the habit of Protestant speech, or out of sheer

The mediation of our Lord not in question.

malice, which cannot bear to leave anything unsaid that appeals to popular prejudice.

Mediation and intercession are of various kinds and degrees of power. The mediation of our Lord is consequential upon, and hardly distinguishable from, His prevailing Sacrifice. The identification is apparent in the language of the New Testament writers. We are come 'to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, *and to the Blood of sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than that of Abel' (Hebr. xii. 24). The mediation of the priest under the Mosaic covenant is aptly illustrated on the occasion (Numb. xvi. 48) when Aaron 'stood between the living and the dead and the plague was stayed.' The priest 'offered for himself and for the errors of the people' (Hebr. ix. 7). Our Lord, then, after the same manner of mediation, '*by His own Blood* entered in once into the holy place' (ver. 12). As the Redemption wrought by our Lord, such is also His Mediation, a divine work, beyond the capacity of the holiest of human kind.

His intercession similarly. What is the prayer of our Lord? 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am' (John xvii. 24). This is not the manner of intercession of any human Saint. Hear Abraham, for example, the friend (James ii. 23)

of God. 'Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord who am but dust and ashes. . . . Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once' (Gen. xviii. 27, 32). The Sacrifice of Calvary is all-sufficing (1 John ii. 1, 2); the mediation of the Precious Blood leaves nothing undone (*ib.* i. 7); the intercession of the Son is unfailing: 'Thou hearest Me, always' (John xi. 42). But is there, then, no mediation, no intercession, besides?

It might, indeed, have been that God commanded us to pray to Him ourselves and let no one pray to Him for us. The same rigorism in prayer, as is found in our natural human relations. According, at least, to the counsel of perfection: 'Call none your Father upon earth, for One is your Father, who is in heaven' (Matt. xxiii. 9). But this is not commanded; we have no such counsel of perfection regarding prayer. We are expressly enjoined to pray for one another, both by our Lord (Matt. v. 44), and by His Apostles (James v. 16; 1 John v. 16). Accordingly it is a matter of every day occurrence for a Christian to ask some other to pray for him. Just as in the former Part (p. 31) we presumed that the Mother of Jesus in her lifetime was frequently asked to pray for the first disciples, though it were those who 'seemed to be pillars.'

If, then, we may ask our friends on earth to pray for us, their mediation in heaven is similarly invoked; whether here or there makes no difference; the Catholic faith asserts the intimate communion of the Church militant with the Church triumphant, of those on earth with those in heaven. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, equally when they are no longer on the earth, because they are still living (Matt. xxii. 32). The life here or the life there is all one life; 'all live to God' (Luke xx. 38) no otherwise than do Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose bodies are buried in peace. Accordingly, if it is right that we should ask the prayers of friends while living, we may ask their prayers where their life is perpetual in the presence of God. They are mediators and intercessors for us.

What has this to do with the one Mediation and the prevailing Advocacy of our Saviour? [1] The things are absolutely apart; no portion of the one circle within the circumference of the other. Except as it is only by the atoning

[1] The mediation of our Lady, alongside of that of her Son, is very perspicuously expressed in the Paschal prayer: 'O God, who hast deigned to gladden the world *through* the Resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, that *through* the Virgin Mary His Mother we may obtain the joys of everlasting life; *through* the same Jesus Christ our Lord.' If the gift of everlasting life is to come to us 'through' Mary, what other gift is there which is not to come to us in the same way (Matt. vi. 33)?

Blood that the prayers we offer or the prayers offered for us have any avail at all; as the atoning Blood is the primal cause and condition of every grace obtained. If any human mediation is supposed to conflict and compete with that One Divine Mediation, by the same reasoning we might be said to share in the Divine Nature because God created us; or Redemption might be called our work, because we are the redeemed! Raise the mediation and intercession of the Blessed Virgin, as it ought to be raised, to the highest power, still it is human intercession and mediation. She is Queen of Saints, supreme of those who 'shall judge angels' (1 Cor. vi. 3), highest set in heaven, the best of God's creation; but still only first among created myriads, and she wears her crown only by donation from the Eternal Immortal Invisible, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Nevertheless, beneath the over-lordship of Omnipotence, she is supreme. With whatever reverence we view the mightiest on earth or the holiest, with whatever awe, with tenfold more must we regard Mary. What is it to be mighty amid our limitations and for our short span? But to hold supreme authority among those who never knew death or who shall die no more! Our Lord warns us not to cause a little child to stumble, not to despise one of them, because

'their angels ever behold the face of My Father in heaven' (Matt. xviii. 10). The peril of harming people, however insignificant, who own such powerful patrons! If Mary is queen of heaven, all those angels are subject to her and under her obedience. Her grandeur is beyond the reach of our imagination, and what must her patronage not be? Is it extraordinary or irrational in us to pay court to her? The extraordinary thing is that anyone should be found neglecting to seek her aid, or even refusing. And meanwhile her grandeur is but a deduction from what is evidenced to us, as the belief respecting her in the first age, as the office and dignity ascribed to her in the original Christian institution of the chosen Apostles of Christ.

All aspects of the sovereignty of Mary could hardly be treated with convenience in a single treatise. But there remains still one particular, which should be considered, so far as the limitations of our discernment permit. If all God's gifts come to us through Mary, if she is our Queen, if she exercises government in any sense under God, how is this practically possible; how is a finite intelligence adequate to the task; how does the universe, or whatever part of the universe, not suffer loss in consequence?

Union of Mary with the Divine Mind.

The answer has been already suggested in the

analogy of the general delegation of God's government. God does not cease to rule because the forces of nature perform their part, nor yet because mankind are given a certain supremacy over the earth, nor yet again because within the human race there is authority and government exercised by one over many, because nations rise and fall, and one empire succeeds another. Nevertheless in the course of the world there is some confusion, and the benevolence of the Omniscient Power does not prevail without conflict, owing to the presence of evil and the counteraction of malevolent designs. But there is no heteronomy of the will in sanctity; in heaven the Will of God is the will of all, the desire and delight of all. 'O how I love Thy law,' exclaims David (Ps. cxix. 97); 'it is my meditation all the day.' And further. The higher the sanctity, the more nearly the spirit approaches to the Source of Light, by so much the more perfect is the understanding of the Divine Mind, the more complete the identity of action. Our Lord, who has an original and absolute identity, said: 'I speak that which I have seen with My Father' (John viii. 38), and: 'The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do' (v. 19). In the beatific vision, the mind of God is revealed by immediate perception,

so far as the perfected spirit is advanced to receive. 'In Thy light shall we see light' (Ps. xxxvi. 9). Mary is 'clothed with the sun'; she is the moon in the celestial firmament whose light is wholly reflected from the central Source. The government of Mary cannot be other than the government of God; the favours she grants us are according to God's will for us to receive.

Obscuration of the glories of Mary in England.

For many years in England there has existed a disposition to 'minimise' the measure and extent of Catholic belief and practical devotion in regard to the Mother of God, even among writers of distinction such as our generation produces. Ever since the large accession, large as we reckon, from the so-called Tractarians sixty years ago. With the view of conciliating some among the Protestants around us, if haply it might be made easier for them to return to the bosom of the Church. The policy was not good, and its initiation might even be deemed reprehensible, both on general grounds, and in particular because the honour of our Lady was not a fit matter for chaffering. The policy failed, it did not make the converts expected, and if an insignificant few were brought in by it, they were not really converted. Meanwhile there has grown up within the Church itself in this country a dangerous inadequacy of

conception. Devotion to our Lady, beyond a supposed moderate limit, is imagined not to belong to Catholic obligation, but to certain sections and individuals. Devotional exercises in her honour, her scapulars, medals, badges, the visitations of her shrines, the offerings of worshippers, even her name,[1] may be heard mentioned, far too commonly, with slighting allusion. Amid 'foreign' forms of devotion, which the Englishman congratulates himself on omitting through his national difference of temper, are largely those that have collected round the person and pre-eminence of Mary. The faith in her which is displayed in Italy[2] or Spain, surprises the travelled Englishman, without inciting him to imitation. The treatises that are written about her; the hierology of her person; such an exposition of 'the glories of Mary' as is made by St. Alphonsus, an acknow-

[1] *E.g.*, in the innocent sodality of the *Enfants de Marie*.

[2] A priest observed to the writer that 'the special modern [*sic*] devotions to the Virgin were things belonging to Italian fervour and the southern temperament, and were not general in the Church or of Catholic example, and that for his part he preferred praying to God to praying to our Lady.' The truth is that numbers in the Church in England, and even among the priesthood, do not possess the Catholic *character* (or *ethos*, Newman would have said), but are merely Protestants of exceptional intelligence who see Protestantism to be unsound and the English Protestant Church to be Protestant. It is not submission, but acting out one's convictions.

ledged Doctor of the Church, we are content to view as unfamiliar to ourselves,[1] as possibly defensible but excessive in expression, as not demanding our study or acceptance. It is deplorable that such a picture should be able to be drawn (*nunc autem et flens dico*), but few will be prepared to dispute its truth and justice. Whether, under such circumstances, an exposition of the Catholic belief is an apology for it, and not rather an instruction regarding it, may well be a matter for serious consideration among Church people.

Her sovereignty already *res judicata.*

But the assertion of the sovereignty of our Lady in preceding pages, and of the consequential prerogative enjoyed by her—to those who are so obliging as to follow the argument—must appear beyond the licence of any minimiser to dispute as other than the belief of the existing Church at large. In the Litany of Loretto Mary is invoked as Queen of Angels; Queen of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins; Queen of all Saints. In her antiphons she is addressed: *Salve Regina; Ave Regina caelorum, Domina Angelorum; Regina caeli laetare.* The

[1] J. H. Newman in 1865 professes himself, with some self-complacency, to be unacquainted with the work of St. Alphonsus (*Letter to Dr. Pusey*, § 5. The whole section is to be noted).

Coronation of our Lady—actual occurrence and not metaphor, plain prose and not poetry—has perhaps no express warrant in Scripture, no evidence in Scripture of its being acknowledged within the Apostolic age. It is an inference, one of those deductions of theological science, whose logical value was appraised on a former page. But the Coronation, separate and distinct from the Assumption, is one of the 'Glorious' Mysteries of the Rosary. How sure must not the Church be of the validity of the deduction, before she permits or indeed enjoins, upon millions of faithful, the daily or weekly repetition of a religious exercise before God, a religious meditation and prayer, upon what would otherwise be pure imagination, a thing non-existent, and the meditation then and prayers a mere foolishness and mockery! These allusions to the royalty of Mary are not the injunctions of a week ago, but have been in vogue for generations; they are securely established in the devotional practice of Christendom, they belong beyond cavil or contradiction to the religious routine of our time. The devotion of the Rosary has been enjoined by many successive Popes, down to Leo. XIII. of recent pious memory, who was himself an ardent client of our Lady, and might be styled almost promoter of her Rosary, and added to the

Litany another petition: 'Queen of the most holy Rosary, pray for us'—yet another aspect in which Mary is still Queen.

But in the earliest authoritative writings which enter more particularly into the exaltation of Mary, she is identified with the woman clothed with the sun and having the moon under her feet, of the Apocalypse[1] (ch. xii.), who has also 'upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' In the earliest exposition of her glories, and not those of a mere thousand years ago, Mary is already a queen. The image is accepted in religious art, just as the Adoration of the Lamb in a former vision (ch. v.). Besides the Virgin and Child there is found this other representation. The pictures of Mary in our churches are not unfrequently designed after the precise description of the Apocalypse; her statues wear the crown of stars. Mary, then, in the devotional appointment of Catholic authority, and moreover in the popular conception, is Queen of Heaven. Her sovereignty within the Church's obedience must surely be considered beyond dispute. And she cannot

[1] The other interpretation, in which the woman is the Church instead (see above Part I. chap. i. p. 11), is certainly inferior. For she is described as 'the woman who brought forth the man child' (ver. 13). The 'great sign' in heaven is also referred not unreasonably to the 'sign' of the prophecy of Isaias (vii. 14): 'The Virgin shall bear a Son.'

be a mere titular queen, a *reine fainéante*, who reigns but does not govern. What is the meaning of her being Queen, if she has no supremacy, no governing authority, in supernatural as well as natural things; if the ministration of the gifts of God to ourselves can proceed without her? She is Queen of Heaven, and the ministering angels who do God's pleasure (Hebr. i. 14) are her servants; those who minister to the heirs of salvation (*ib.*) among human creatures are under her rule. All the gifts of God come to us through Mary the Queen.

## CHAPTER V

### MARY MOTHER

THE contention of the two preceding chapters—a Catholic at once perceives—however true and irrefragable, is only a half statement, and, like all such, conveys a false impression of the reality. Devotion to our Lady is not a thing of loyalty to our sovereign, not only of loyalty. It is before that a thing of piety, towards one who is revealed to us as our Mother, towards the Mother God has given us. This Mother has been exalted to the throne, but she does not cease to be our Mother for that; while we acknowledge her to be Queen, our relation towards her is very little altered by her dignity. Similarly, on the part of our Lady. She is by title, in style and splendour she is, Queen; she is crowned; she is *circumdata varietate*;[1] she is *intus speciosior*; she is *terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*.[2] But she does not bear rule, not in our regard, as Queen; over us her rule is not regal, but maternal.

[1] 'In embroidered apparel.' [2] 'More beautiful within.' [3] 'Terrible as an army set in array.'

In heaven also, as already observed, the nature of rule and government will be different from anything of which we have experience. Because in heaven there is no counteraction; nothing to restrain or control. Neither in earth or heaven is Mary's queenship according to any pattern we can construct.

Where her rule would be operative in the way we are accustomed to conceive of ruling, would be in relation to evil spirits, the intrusive apostates of the world of darkness. 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel'[1] (Ps. ii. 9). Mary is not Queen of Hell, but she is a Queen, a powerful Queen, and Hell cowers beneath her sway. It is again an article of belief such as is reached by theological deduction, but again the belief is also confirmed by accumulated experience. Our Lady is represented in art as having her foot upon the serpent, although this is not peculiar to her, but other Saints are similarly represented. In our Lady's case, however, there is an allusion to the text in Genesis (iii. 15), where it is prophesied that 'she shall bruise the serpent's head.'[2] And in the

Adversatrix diaboli.

[1] Originally of the Son of Mary, but applied also to His servants in Apoc. ii. 27.

[2] Certainly the pronoun may grammatically refer to the seed, as Protestants will have it. But this is not natural,

Apocalypse (xii. 13–17) there is war between the serpent and the woman who wears the crown of stars. Yet more sure is the theological deduction. For the enemies of the Son of Mary are her enemies also (Apoc. *l. c.*), and of our Lord it is prophesied 'the dragon Thou shalt trample under Thy feet' (Ps. xci. 13). We may observe that the entire sovereignty of Mary is reflected, not original, and all things are under her feet because they are under the feet of the Son of God (Ps. viii. 6; Hebr. ii. 8), who is also Son of Mary. The Saints have 'power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the might of the enemy' (Luke x. 19), power given to them by Jesus and exercised in His name (ver. 17). 'The God of peace,' writes St. Paul (Rom. xvi. 20), 'shall tread Satan under your feet shortly.' Such power is given in pre-eminence to the Queen of Saints.

Mary is, then, under God, the devil's most formidable adversary. She may be called his Queen in the sense that to her power he is subject. Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, represents the beginning of the angelic rebellion as being when the Son of God was proclaimed: 'I have anointed My king upon My holy hill' (Ps. ii. 6)—an Arian

and is not according to the balance of the sentence. It is a good argumentative evasion, but no more.

blasphemy, no doubt,[1] but Milton was no Catholic. The picture would have been true—and equally dramatic—if he had represented the rage and aggravated malice of the infernal powers upon the Coronation of the Mother of God (Apoc. *l. c.*). They feared her autocracy, and her foot was upon the necks of her enemies; reluctant and rebellious, they knew and confessed her rule.

In heaven our Lady holds no such sovereignty. We may say of her, in our way of speaking, that she would be astonished to hear that she ruled at all. The Virgin-Mother of Nazareth, though she might be titular queen of Judaea, was not of the sort, in her gentle human nature, of which rulers, to human conception, are made. Personality remains. The soul in glory is the same soul that passed its earthly probation. Mary is now, though glorified and crowned, what she was when the shepherds paid her homage. She is 'exalted' because she was 'humble and meek,' and such she remains in her exaltation. In heaven the highest archangel does obeisance to her, as did the refulgent Gabriel when he was

[1] The Patristic account was that the pride of Lucifer could not endure the prospect—which might be antecedently revealed to the angelic host—of the new human creation being raised above the angelic nature by the destined hypostatic union with the Word through the Incarnation. This is evidently a different thing altogether.

sent to Nazareth: *Ave, gratia plena.*[1] The rainbow ranks of the great multitude acclaim her. But that is because she is Mother of God. There is nothing for her to rule, she has no commands to issue.

Mary is Mother of God, because she bore our Lord—*qui natus est ex Maria Virgine.*[2] It demands neither argument nor explanation. It is deduced from the Creed of Nicaea and established by the decision of Ephesus. Mary was recommended by our Lord upon the Cross to the Apostle St. John to be thenceforward his Mother—to him as the sole present representative of the Eleven, and through the Eleven to the body of the disciples, to Christians in general. Mary is our Mother.

Origin of the Motherhood.

And this may be deduced irrespectively of the actual designation of Calvary. Our Lord took upon Him the human nature. He is 'the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. viii. 29). If He has adopted us to be His brothers ('He is not ashamed to call them brothers,' Hebr. ii. 11), we become the adopted children of His Mother also: 'Behold I and the children whom God has given me' (ver. 13). Or again, on our part we acknowledge her to be our Mother—it cannot be evaded. Mary is known to us both in Scripture and

[1] 'Hail, full of grace.'
[2] 'Who was born of the Virgin Mary.'

Tradition as the Mother of our Lord, she is most commonly represented in Christian art with the Divine Infant in her arms, her images so represent her. All the devotion we learn towards her is thus in the maternal relation; she is the perfection and type of motherhood; she is called Mother, *Mater amabilis*, *Mater admirabilis*.[1] To us she is always *the* Mother, and this is scarcely removed from being *our* Mother. Mary would thus be the Mother of Christendom, though our Lord had not adopted us as His brothers, and though He had not specially so designated her. But He has so designated her, and He has so adopted us. Our religious instinct, our natural intelligence, anticipates or at least accepts our Lord's appointment. Mother we learn to call her who was the Mother of Jesus. The conclusion has far-reaching consequences.

The Motherhood in Christianity.

Fatherhood is a constitutive relation in the order of God's kingdom over the entire universe. He is Himself revealed to us as our Father, and Christ our Lord also occupies that relation—*Pater futuri saeculi* (Is. ix. 6). It is impossible to overestimate the effect—one would not say in the militant first progress of the Christian creed, but in its after recognition—of the simple revelation

[1] 'Mother most amiable, Mother most admirable.'

of the Fatherhood of God.[1] But while God was revealed to us as our Father, there was coincidently the manifestation of one among ourselves as the Mother of Christendom. No one needs to listen to argument upon the association of the name of Mother. Now Christianity appeals—the life and death of our Lord is full of it—to our affections as much as it satisfies our understanding and spiritual craving. Somewhere in Christianity we might anticipate that the most moving of our associations would appear. It appears blazingly on the first page. Can you omit the Mother and Child from Christianity? Can you deny the Mother of Bethlehem to be our Mother as well?

The Motherhood in relation to the sovereignty; *ex parte subjectorum.*

The Motherhood of Mary must bear relation to her sovereignty. First of all, it is the ground of her sovereignty. She holds supremacy as being Mother of God. It is there, in that regard, that she is 'blessed among women.' Her Assumption, her Coronation, follow upon her prior election to be the Mother of the Chosen Seed. But further, after that, after she is assumed and

[1] In paganism God is the Father of men, but only as their Creator. In the Mosaic Revelation He is the Father of the Chosen People alone (Is. lxiii. 16; John viii. 41), at least to the popular conception. Christ first reveals God to all as the Father of all in a *personal* relation, imaged in His own constant filial intimacy—'My Father and your Father' (John xx. 17).

crowned, the sovereignty is affected by its origin, and our relation as subjects is not the same when the Queen is our Mother. It may be said at once that there is no illustration, no analogous example, to be derived from our sensible experience. What is—we ask and desire to know—what is the relation we thus come to hold? We have, for seeming parallel, not unfrequently in history, the sudden aggrandisement of a family from which a queen-consort is taken; the queen is a different person to her relations, and they encroach upon her as feeling confident of her favour. We have the resuscitation of the persecuted Jewish nation, when the Jewess Esther was made queen of Assuerus. 'If I have found favour in thy sight, and if it please the king, let my people be given me at my request. And the king held out toward Esther the golden sceptre' (Esther viii. 4; v. 2). Now Mary, the angel said, had 'found favour' with God.

But the picture belongs to a past age and not to our own surroundings. We might think rather to-day of class feeling and the subjection of races. The lower classes are conscious of a different relation to the government of a country in which there are persons of their own class holding office. The founder of the English colonial empire was long known as 'the great Commoner,' and commanded popular allegiance under that title.

Or we might suppose the altered position of the Jews in Russia or of the Greeks within the dominions of the Turk, when Jew or Greek attained to political eminence. Yet, wherever our imagination may travel, there is no real illustration to be found amid our corrupt conditions. Power with us is often attained by illegitimate means, and the distribution of favour is not according to justice. The first idea is that there are classes and races unjustly oppressed, and we are thus reminded from the beginning that it is our own world and no other with which we are dealing.

With the exaltation of Mary, as already observed, justice remains supreme, and her favour is accordant with the Will of God. It is a new and unexampled condition, in the same way as every heavenly appointment traverses our expectation, in the same way as we believe, without understanding it, that 'the meek shall inherit the earth'—and have no illustration of it to adduce. But, at any rate, with our Lady's exaltation, we have one of ourselves, one of our own race, of our own species, who is Queen of earth and heaven, and further we have one who exercises towards us a mother's regard.

Certainly, Mary is our Mother, first of all, as being the Mother of our Lord. Our brother Christ (Matt. xxviii. 10, etc.) implies our Mother

Mary; we are her children because He adopted us into His family. But also Mary herself undoubtedly adopts us. When she accepted the appointment of God in her Annunciation—*Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*—she accepted coincidently every hidden sequel, both the sword that should pierce her soul, and the pangs of her mystical maternity. And she undeniably accepts at the foot of the Cross the son that is there given her—'Woman, behold thy son.' By that adoption, where she stands, she is in travail with a multitudinous progeny, as Christ upon the Cross 'died for all' (2 Cor. v. 14). Mary becomes the second Eve and the mother of all living.[1]

The queen rules all, she is queen of all, but she is queen in a somewhat different way within the royal family. At least the human race, if they will accept the relationship—*pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*, peace through the Incarnation, through Him who was 'born of a woman'—belong to the family of Mary. We are 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a purchased people—

[1] The comparison is frequent in Patristic literature. 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children' (Gen. iii. 16), is fulfilled in the dolours of our Lady beneath the Cross; not otherwise in her case. The *intacta virginitas* is a tradition of the earliest age, *e.g.*, in the *Protevangelium Iacobi*, which is assigned by Harnack to the end of the second or beginning of the third century.

*populus acquisitionis*' (1 Petr. ii. 9). We do not approach Mary, offer her our devotion, pay her our homage, as to a stranger, with shyness and apprehension, but we are counted as her children and confidently expect her favourable regard. Our attitude is indeed one of loyalty, as her subjects, but before that and more powerfully than that, it is an attitude of filial piety.

The relation carries further (and is thus of itself antecedently probable) what is the leading motive of the Christian symphony—the charity of God towards us. 'Anyone of you that is a father,' our Lord expostulates, 'if his son asks him for bread, will he give him a stone?' (Luke xi. 11) . . . 'It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish.' (Matt. xviii. 14) . . . 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered' (x. 30). . . . 'Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you' (John xvi. 23). But God, though He has taken our human nature and was found in the likeness of men, yet is He still the great and terrible God (Deut. x. 17), the 'high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity' (Is. lvii. 15). 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in His holy place' (Ps. xxiv. 3)? Who can say: 'Here, take me, with the clean hands and the clean heart'? For the poor, the kingdom of heaven is theirs. But for the

guilty? The charity of God, and the wisdom of God, foreseeing our timidity, gave us Mary. In Mary we have a friend at court. 'Remember, Virgin Mother of God, within the presence of God, to speak a good word for us and to turn away His anger from us.'[1] 'And the king held out toward Esther the golden sceptre.'

*Ex parte Reginae.*

Towards ourselves, then, towards her own kin, the rule of Mary is maternal. The character of such a rule is expressed by its name. Any good mother exercises her authority to protect her children from harm and to give them such moderate and innocent pleasures as they may enjoy without corrupting effect upon themselves. She teaches them gentleness and courage, to do their duty and to fear God. Mary's maternal rule must have a similar aim. *Vitam praesta puram, Iter para tutum, Monstra te esse matrem.*[2] Further, any good mother — it is proverbial—rather favours the weakling and the prodigal, never abandons hope, never loses affection for her child, however far the child may have wandered astray. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb?' (Is. xlix. 15)—the most enduring of compassions,

[1] Gradual of Feast of the Dolours.

[2] 'Make our life pure, give us safe journey, show thyself a mother.'

and only the ocean of Divine Mercy wider. Such is mother's love. But the devotion of Mary to her children is even more than that, because she is the Mother of Sorrows, because she stood beneath the Cross of her divine Son and has comprehended the height and depth, the love of Jesus for sinners. What her Son and Lord feels, she feels by sympathy; she is sensitive to every emotion of the Sacred Heart. Was not its beating first awakened by the beating of her maternal heart? The blood of its pulse was blood of her own that she gave. Mary has the same regard for sinners that she has learnt to belong to the heart of Jesus—*advocata peccatorum*—that is, the same regard for humanity at large, whatever our transgressions and estrangement from goodness and truth. *Monstra te esse matrem, Sumat per te preces Qui pro nobis natus Tulit esse tuus.*[1]

The operation of Mary's maternal rule over us is that her patronage shields us from harm, and obtains for us the divine mercy when we have fallen from grace. She is our Queen, for loyalty, for devotion, for honour and majesty; we offer our homage and beseech her royal favour. But she is our Mother, in whom to confide, whose counsel to seek; to whom we may

[1] 'Show thyself a mother, Offer Him our sighs, Who for us incarnate, Did not thee despise.'

have recourse in any trouble; to whom we owe filial duty; we should be mindful of her wishes and pay her loving obedience; next to displeasing God, we should be most afraid of displeasing our Mother.

Mary is Mother of our Lord, and we are adopted into His family and own her also as our Mother. It is hard to conceive how all that has been said should not inevitably follow upon that first beginning. Who would quarrel with her being Queen, holding and exercising a real sovereignty, so soon as we learn and understand what is meant by it—that she exercises over us a mother's care, that the prayers of Mary in heaven are offered up for us, just as were the prayers of our mother who brought us into the world? Who would doubt that, if Mary is our Mother, we please God most by honouring her, that our Mother's prayers are heard for us more than the prayers of any other? God has commanded us to honour father and mother. He honours Himself a mother's love and a mother's prayers.

## CHAPTER VI

### MARY ADVOCATE

If Mary exercises a mother's care over us, if she prays for us, as good mothers pray for their children, if her sovereignty means precisely this, then the Queen of Heaven is our Advocate. 'Let my people be given me at my request.' In another aspect it appears incongruous that she should hold both the one and the other title. For a delegated sovereignty, we are taught, has been bestowed upon Mary; dominion is hers; she is a queen quite really and truly. Then it would seem she does not make entreaty; she grants, and others entreat her; her part is not advocacy but listening to prayer, receiving petition and bestowing royal favour upon her suppliants.

How Advocate and yet Queen.

Nor is the representation of her dignity, which would thus be made, altogether inaccurate, but is partly endorsed in Catholic devotional use. For it is common, when invoking the patronage of whatever Saint, to say a Hail Mary at the shrine. Or at another time a Pater, Ave and

Gloria may be recited in honour of the Saint. In the former case the intercession of the Saint is clearly sought by grace of Mary. In the latter the Saint is distinguished, whether in recognition of past or imprecation of future aid, or simply in act of homage—the Saint is distinguished by the intention of the prayer and worship of God, with which is associated, as commonly, the invocation of Mary; there is petition addressed to Mary, and if the prayers of the Saint which we beseech are offered to God for us, they seem still to pass through the hands of Mary. Or it may be represented that, in asking the Saint's intercession, we say the Hail Mary as the ordinary device and instrument of supplication; and then the prayer we say, the prayer that is to ascend by favour of the Saint, is a prayer addressed to the Queen of all Saints. The Saint is our advocate with God, but by way of Mary and precedently therefore with her. In general, supplication is directly addressed to the Blessed Virgin, not asking for advocacy but for benefit and aid: *Funda nos in pace, mites fac et castos, Jesum nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.*[1] Quite in accordance with the use and custom of sovereignty as existing in our own world.

[1] 'Stablish us in peace, make us gentle and chaste, show us after this life Jesus.'

When anyone approaches the steps of the throne, it may be merely to offer homage, it may be to present a petition; it could hardly be to ask for petition to be made. Yet the earthly monarch's favour is not final, his power is limited: 'Am I God,' said King Joram, 'to kill and make alive?' (4 Kings v. 7). God is equally over all in earth as over all in heaven. The petition presented to an earthly queen is only obtained if it is according to the Will of God that it should be so.[1] But there is no mention of this in the wording of the petition, and the queen grants the petition without express reference to the Will of God, and execution follows, though it should not be God's directive purpose but His allowance alone.

There is a difference doubtless when the earth's atmosphere is left, within the ether of heaven. As has already been observed in relation to rule in general. The glory of God gives light to the heavenly city in lieu of sun (Apoc. xxi. 23),

[1] That is to say, according to His permissive Will. For many things happen on the earth which God does not will directively. There is evil present with us in its various forms, physical pain and disaster, moral perversion—things allowed by God for a time, but which it would be blasphemy to ascribe to His direction. Nor is the Will of God constantly done, even when indifferent things or positive benefits are originated; because first of our ignorance what that Will might be, and secondly because we are not perfect in sanctity—there are divergencies from complete accordance.

and in that light everything is transacted. The distinction between the permissive and directive Will of God becomes there merely theoretical; for our theologians, but not for the Saints in bliss. Thus the favours that the Queen of Heaven bestows are the ordination of God;[1] her grant of them is her prayer: 'Mother of God, pray for us.' Queen or Advocate is all one.

How our Lord is our Advocate.

But the way is not yet clear. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, and He is the propitiation for our sins' (1 John ii. 1). One ought, perhaps, out of courtesy to take note of the Protestant's irrefutable objection. It is our Lord and not our Lady who is Advocate. We need none besides.

Well, if you press me with the rigour of the letter, we have certainly on Scriptural authority another expressly named. The writer, whose language you adduce, is St. John, and in the Gospel that bears his name we are informed of 'another Advocate, the Spirit of truth' (John xiv. 16).[2] If you urge that the sense of the title in one reference is different from the sense in the other, notwithstanding that the writer

[1] See above, p. 167.

[2] In the two passages different English equivalents generally appear in translation, but the word employed by St. John is the same—παράκλητος, Paraclete, Comforter, Advocate.

is the same, then you make no point by finding the word employed in St. John's Epistle. Our Lord may be termed our Advocate, without being so in the first-hand signification of the word, because the Spirit of truth is not Advocate, you agree, in such first-hand signification. The term is applied to our Lord in the single text, and in what sense it is intended must therefore be discovered from the single text. We have seen above (Ch. IV.) that the Mediation or Intercession of our Lord was hardly distinguishable from His atoning Sacrifice. So is He revealed in the text under consideration as at once our 'Advocate with the Father' and 'the Propitiation for our sins.' In his apocalyptic vision St. John had beheld 'a throne set in heaven' and 'in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain' (Apoc. iv. 2; v. 6), and the hymn of heaven ran: 'Thou wast slain and hast purchased us for God by Thy Blood' (ver. 9), and the Martyrs had 'washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb' (vii. 14). When first innocent blood was shed upon the earth, the blood of the martyred Abel, God said that the voice of the blood cried to Him from the earth (Gen. iv. 10). The Blood of Christ is offered daily on Christian altars and 'speaketh better things than that of Abel' (Hebr. xii. 24). The Precious Blood

(1 Petr. i. 19) with which we were redeemed, has a voice to plead and propitiate, and Christ is our Advocate as He has 'by His own blood entered once into the holy place having found for us an eternal ransom' (Hebr. ix. 12).

What *this* sense has to do with the Queen of Heaven being our Advocate, no sane intelligence could imagine. It has no more relevance than has the Atonement of Christ in reference to that which was made by Moses on Sinai (Exod. xxxii. 30. *Hebr.*).

Our Lady, then, holds various titles which express the several relations towards us of her kindness—Refuge of Sinners, Help of Christians, etc. They seem to refer in the main to the events and circumstances of our present life—*ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle;* though indeed it would be not less but more our deliverance from spiritual foes and perseverance in justice that was intended. Titles that extend to the other world are on their part largely mystical and metaphorical—Gate of Heaven, Star of the Sea, etc. But when Mary is entitled our Advocate, the reference is most generally to our passage from this world into another: 'Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.' Our Advocate in attaining to the Beatific vision: *Eia ergo, Advocata*

'In the hour of our death.'

*nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte, et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.*[1] Or in escaping eternal reprobation: *Flammis ne urar succensus, per te, Virgo, sim defensus in die judicii.*[2] Or in grasping the joys of Paradise: *Da per matrem me venire ad palmam victoriae.*[3] Or in resisting the last most malignant assault of the enemy: Mary is Help of Christians, and we pray that 'fortified by her protection we may be strong to win victory from the malignant foe in death.'[4]

There is perhaps nothing recondite or of hierological derivation when Mary is entitled our Advocate, and when it is most generally meant that she is so on the borderland between this world and the other. *Spes agonizantium, Janua caeli,* let her be named. Let it be her office to 'open our eyes in death.'[5] But no such exalted topic is needed to introduce. The explanation is very simple. For when once we have learnt to look to the Mother of God for

[1] 'Come, then, our Advocate; Oh, turn on us those pitying eyes of thine; And our long exile past, Show us at last Jesus, of thy pure womb the fruit divine.'

[2] 'Leave me not to burn for ever; Virgin, thou my soul deliver, In the dreadful judgment day.'

[3] 'By Thy Mother, Lord, befriended, Grant me when this life is ended, Palm of victory to attain.'

[4] Proper of the Feast of our Lady of Dolours.

[5] Vergil, *Aen.* iv. 244.

help and succour, it must follow that the greater our need, the more certain is our flying to her. And though in reality we may not have most need of help at the hour of death, we feel our need most then. Death is the king of terrors. It appals beyond all else by its loneliness and its mystery. Solitary, no friend within call, the soul wanders forth into the waste unknown.

Or what if this be the end? *Memento, homo, quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris.*[1] Any hour in life to think of death is to check mirth and gladness, when the cup is at our lips.' Death, the king of terrors, so known and so named. The brave man meets it bravely; he nerves himself to meet it. Still the king of terrors. 'Pray for us, Mother of God, now and at the hour of our death.' In especial then. It seems to require no explanation, nor need to rest upon revelation or instruction, when Mary is viewed as Advocate chiefly in relation to the promise and peril of a future existence.

Still, with such predisposition to invoke her aid in such dark hour, and as the consequent practice with long use and wont takes liturgical shape, it could hardly fail to be recognised, hierologically, that Mary would have particular kindness for the agonising soul, as having herself

[1] 'Remember, O man, that thou art dust and unto dust shalt thou return.'

passed through a greater torment—*Mater dolorosa. Felices (!) sensus beatae Mariae virginis, qui sine morte meruerunt martyrii palmam sub cruce Domini.*[1] In the inspired record of the history of the Jewish people, there are two pictures of a mother's despair, which are luminous with horror, the picture of Agar in the wilderness, who laid her child under a bush, and sat down a bowshot distance off, that she might not see her child die of thirst (Gen. xxi. 15, 16); and the picture of Respha watching day and night the dead bodies of her murdered children (2 Kings xxi. 10). Painters have endeavoured to depict the station of the Virgin-Mother at the foot of the Cross. None has dared to show her—no one, at least, of the great masters—when the lifeless Body was laid upon the ground.[2] 'As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God' (Ps. xlii. 10). There has been no torment of desolation like hers, excepting only that of the Man of Sorrows

[1] Proper of the Feast of our Lady of Dolours: 'Happy senses of the blessed Virgin Mary that without death merited the palm of martyrdom beneath the cross of the Lord.'

[2] Rubens in his *Descent from the Cross* has the grand style, but his conception is vulgarly inadequate. He instinctively as an artist is satisfied with the Descent, and avoids the later tableau. The *Pietà*, in religious art, would be later, at the Sepulchre, not at the Cross.

whom she bore. But then further. The Passion and Death of her divine Son, that she witnessed and condoled, were for the salvation of each particular human soul. Must not the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mother be moved at the last hour of each one of her adopted children, when eternity is hanging in the balance? As the tree falls, so shall it lie. 'Lost' and 'saved' is heard above as the curtain falls. Hope of the agonising, Advocate of sinners, pray for the dying soul, for whom Christ died.

But the scenic style of death changes as men change and as their associations change. In our later day it is said that people are not afraid of dying, but only of suffering pain, as may happen when they die; the soldier's terror is not death but being badly wounded. A greater sensitiveness to pain belongs to the advance of civilisation, as to the higher species. The savage does not feel a pang as great as the civilised man, nor does the worm we tread upon. It is nothing to be ashamed of.

Modern sentiment.

But how is it that the terror of death has gone? So that, for example, men and women, and even children, now commit suicide for any slight vexation. The social philosopher should have an answer, and our present inquiry is possibly concerned. Is this absence of the fear of death an unexpected and unintended, wholly

unconscious, piece of evidence, testifying to the complete domination that Christianity achieved? Immortality, which Christianity established, has been the belief of centuries upon centuries, and becomes a nerve-impress in the brain of heredity. The instinct of immortality is transmitted from father to son, like the elementary notions of number or like a musical ear.[1] Thus Christian belief may be fading or lost, but the instinct here, if only here, remains; we have not to-day the hesitancy of Cicero or the Sadduceeism of King Ezechias (Is. xxxviii. 10–20).

This curious contradiction is very conspicuous in the prevalence of suicide. To Christian apprehension suicide is the most horrible of crimes, as it is contained in its very notion that there is no space for repentance after commission. 'I have no part in life but for as long as I go between the pyre and the sword of Achilles' son.'[2] And for sin unrepented there is, according to the Christian revelation, nothing but the fearful prospect of the undying worm and the quenchless fire. Anyone who commits suicide cannot believe in the Christian Revelation. Yet it is due to Christianity that the modern suicide

[1] The Arabians are said to divide the tone into thirds, so that they cannot hear a semitone, just as we cannot hear thirds of a tone, though approached in the enharmonic scale.

[2] Euripides, *Hecuba*, 436, 7.

is not afraid of annihilation, but anticipates a change to something better than he has at present. Make him the most irreligious and sceptical—and suicides are not disproportionately so—he will still at the back of his brain have a fancy of not ending everything. The explanation is, then, partly that the belief in immortality, as observed, has become a hereditary instinct, partly that the Christianity of sentiment does survive, though not that of revelation. Moral integrity, kindness of heart, the belief in a God and in a future life—that is what is now generally intended by Christianity. It is not, of course, the Christianity of Christ. The Christianity of Christ was a dogmatic confession. 'Believe in God, believe also in Me.'

'Hope of the dying.'

In *that* Christianity the fear of death is found simultaneously with the confidence of immortality. The Virgin-Mother in Catholic belief assists the departing soul for whose salvation she gave her only Son, the soul for whom Christ died. Why should we not say rather, for whom Christ rose again? By His resurrection He delivered those who from fear of death were all their lifetime enslaved (Hebr. ii. 15). If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way those who sleep in Jesus God will bring to life again along with Him (1 Thess. iv. 14). O death, where

is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory? (1 Cor. xv. 55). *Deus meus et omnia.*[1] We have the assurance of eternal life; we need no arm of flesh in our hour of final trial. Why should the assistance of our Lady be any concern to us?

Because, again, Christianity is a Revelation. It reveals the immortality of the soul. But it reveals more. We rise again. But observe: 'they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation' (John v. 29). Death has no terrors to the sincere Christian, as it had none to St. Paul, who deemed death 'far better' (Phil. i. 23). Only which of us can feel assured within himself of deserving to be so called? Or at any rate there may be some who have misgivings. It is not death, as Hamlet says, but the dread of the things after death. Where we gain by the assurance of immortality, we undoubtedly lose by the other assurance of judgment to follow. The Revelation that gives us one, gives both.

It is not, therefore, unnatural for a Christian, or any evidence of lack of faith, to feel afraid of death and to be grateful for any comfort he may get in his last hour. Or let it stand thus. Death is no longer in Christianity the king of

[1] 'My God and my all.'

terrors. Happy souls of those born after Christ, who have been instructed in His Revelation, in Christianity; because they die in hope, they depart out of this world in peace. But such peace and happiness are only found *in Christianity*. The record and tradition *of Christianity* inform us of the dignity and office of the Virgin-Mother (as in our first Part), and it is a sure deduction, taught by the responsible teachers and custodians of the divine tradition, that she has a concern for the departing soul, and that she vouchsafes it her assistance. How much of peace and happiness is associated with that assurance, the dying may be able to say. Even then, peace and happiness are not the question. But whether in thought and act we are loyal to the Catholic faith. There may be a calm and beautiful deathbed that no good angel comes near. And it may be due to the prayers of our Lady that the soul is ill at ease: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

Power and assistance of Mary beyond the grave.

Above (p. 174), it was explained that, though Queen of earth and of heaven, our Lady could not be Queen of Hell, and how nevertheless her rule and exaltation was felt there. But indeed our Lady really and actually is Queen of Hell, in that sense in which it is declared in the Creed that our Lord 'descended into Hell.' This is, of

course, the Hades of Greek eschatology, Sheol[1] in Hebrew, the place of departed souls, as distinguished from Elysium or Heaven on the one hand, and from Tartarus or Gehenna on the other. The souls in Purgatory[2] are in such condition that, their time of probation being over, nothing that they can do, not even prayers they offer, can any longer be of avail to them in respect of merit or purgation. On the other hand, they may still have something done for them, and hence they are prayed for and Masses said for them by survivors on earth. But likewise the Saints in bliss may help those suffering[3] in Purgatory, so far as is according

[1] Sheol is apparently used as merely equivalent to the grave, or balancing it in the notional rhythm of Hebrew poetry (Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 3, 9; lxxxviii. 3, 4; Is. xxxviii. 18; Os. xiii. 14), but as prophetic of our Lord's death and resurrection (Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 31) must be taken in the sense of the Creed.

[2] The word is Latin, and therefore absent from the New Testament, and is in fact an ecclesiastical term of later introduction. But it is equivalent to Hades, as there also the souls appear to be under suffering, according to the expression of St. Peter that our Lord 'went and preached to the spirits in prison' (1 Petr. iii. 19). Our Lord seems to speak of 'prison' in the same reference (Matt. v. 25, 26).

[3] The suffering of Purgatory is said to be very extreme, but its intensity must be greatly mitigated, or its endurance at least assisted, by the consciousness of the sufferer that his salvation, and therefore ultimate bliss, is now secure. One is irresistibly reminded of the expression of St. Paul: 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worth counting as compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us'

to the Divine Will. At any rate the Saints are invited to do so by our prayers, and it is a commonplace in Catholic devotional practice that the stored merits of Martyrs and Confessors and the 'Indulgences' thence obtained may be applied to the benefit of the souls in Purgatory. Such relation must be held in pre-eminent degree by the Queen of all Saints. Mary is our Advocate not only at the hour of death but beyond it.

Reasonableness of the title of Advocate.

It is difficult to conceive of any objection being taken to our having the prayers of the Mother of our Lord, whether on the ground of the idea being extravagant or superstitious or dishonouring to God, or on any other ground whatever. Unless it be plainly alleged to be impossible that those who still live to God, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (above, p. 163), should pray for us who remain in the earthly life; or impossible, if they might pray for us, that petition of ours should reach them to ask their prayers. Certainly we have no proof of either possibility that could be alleged to satisfy external cavil. But it is surely an innocent idea, and even beautiful,

(Rom. viii. 18, and similarly elsewhere). Besides, one great part of the suffering is understood to be the temporary separation from the Source of bliss—as the thirst, a thousand times intensified, of a thirsty man who sees water that he cannot reach—and this pain the sufferer must rejoice to have, however extreme.

this of a Jacob's ladder between earth and heaven, by which our petitions could ascend to those above, and the blessings descend which they obtain for us. One might say more. It is an idea eminently enlarging to the spiritual abilities, eminently spiritualising, making our life here less 'of the earth, earthy,' our conversation more in heaven, a recollection continually with us that here we have no abiding city but are citizens of another country, where dwell our friends and where we store our treasure. Are we thereby, through entertaining that idea, less disposed to worship God who is the Splendour of that world of light? On the other hand, categorically to deny communication between this world and the other is, as Aristotle said (*Eth. Nich.* i. 11), 'too unsocial, too contrary to the general opinion'; it rests, this denial, on no known facts, whether of experience or testimony; it represents, almost always, an impatience of supernatural ideas altogether, and an ingrained avidity after their disproof and extermination. Unless, indeed, it is merely due to defective spiritual education, the absence of the notion, or denial learnt from a school catechism; and then it is not militant, it does not denounce or defame.

That we should have the prayers of Mary is no enlargement beyond what we might have

obtained from her in her Galilean home. It cannot, then, surely be called aggrandisement or deification of the Mother of God, such as is alleged against the Church under the name of Mariolatry. No one in possession of his wits could represent it so. And then further. If you deny that we have Mary's prayers, you deny all that has preceded in this Part. Can you do that? Mary is Queen because God has crowned her; she is Mother of God. Queen and Mother. But as regards ourselves, her royalty is exercised and her mother's care for us is displayed by her prayers for us; her royal favours and her mother's lessons are her prayers. When all is said, it comes to this as regards ourselves, that Mary is our Advocate. 'Mother of God, pray for us, grant us a blessing, succour us, make us meek and pure, grant us after this life to behold the face of Jesus.' What she grants is the will of God for us. Her acts are prayers.

The assistance of the Virgin-Mother at the hour of death and beyond the grave is fairly deduced, if her aid is bestowed at all. We have, however, no knowledge of what her action may be in the world of her present glory beyond what has been already exhibited, and so in particular regarding the character of her relation towards the souls in

The Sabbatine Indulgence.

Purgatory, or any action in their regard that belongs to her. Some have alleged that it is her office to conduct the souls to bliss whose term of purification is accomplished, an idea originally suggested, perhaps, by our Lord's descent into Hell; the action of the Mother imitates and repeats that of her Son; where He has shown the way, she follows in her later investiture. The so-called Sabbatine Indulgence is covenanted to those who wear the brown scapular of the Carmelite Order. On the Saturday succeeding their death—just as on the day after Good Friday our Lord descended into Hell—Mary journeys into the place of their purgation and gives them release. The Sabbatine Indulgence has no warrant in the authoritative teaching of the Church. At the same time such 'revelations' of mystical theology are not to be absolutely denied or impugned. Supposing a truly devout wearer of the scapular, it may very well follow that such a degree of sanctity is attained in this life that there is very little Purgatory to pass through, and the Sabbatine Indulgence may be completely in accord with what is independently the rule of divine Justice. But this is liable to be misunderstood, and the majority of claimants would not attain to such

[1] There are some further accompanying observances enjoined.

devout completeness. The speculation, however, is evidence of a general belief in the care of our Lady extending to the souls in Purgatory, and on that account seemed deserving of mention. There cannot be an exaggeration without an opinion of which it is the exaggeration. Mary is Queen of Hell, *i.e.*, of Purgatory, in the sense that her care for her adopted children does not end with their death, any more than does our own care for our children or other relatives and friends.[1] We may not only obtain the assistance of the Blessed Virgin for our friends in this world, but devotions to her may be offered on behalf of the departed. 'Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them—Holy Mary, pray for them.'

[1] Among things innocent and even beautiful may surely be included the Catholic practice of pursuing those we have loved and lost with active service of affection. The benefits we endeavour to obtain for the souls in purgatory are correlative to the help bestowed on us by those in bliss. Nothing is more melancholy than the visit of a Protestant to a loved tomb; a few flowers laid upon it, and so back again with blinding tears, the prayer of the heart choked back, a dutiful dumbness kept unbroken. Or at most the pilgrim prays at the grave for some benefit for himself, quite abstractedly, as it might be in his own house. What is that to do for his grief and mourning?

## CHAPTER VII

### MARY IN MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

MYSTICAL theology is not the same as mysticism, but the name has an earlier parentage. Mysticism means discovering a hidden meaning in word or action besides that which lies on the surface, through symbolism or by the science of correspondences, which makes of the natural phenomenon and of its expression in language a mere cryptogram to stand for a spiritual reality and to convey a spiritual meaning. In mysticism the miracle of Cana would represent the change of natural into revealed truth; the two 'small fishes' at the miraculous feeding of Capharnaum would symbolise the divine and human Natures, which are both present in the Sacrament, etc. Some passages of Scripture are openly mystical; we should not think the four living creatures, in Apoc. iv. 6, foll., Ezech. i. 5, foll., to be literally such as they are described. Mysticism is not in itself evil, but it is only to be handled by doctors of great spiritual learning; otherwise it has a growing fascination, as of a

What is mystical theology?

drug, for those who once begin with it, and leads the inexperienced into vast ranges of error.

Mystical theology, on the other hand, has reference etymologically to the 'mysteries' of the ancient Greek or Egyptian or Magian paganism, and to those who were 'initiated' into the mysteries. It signifies a severer religious exercise and a more intense religious study belonging to an elect few who are called by God to particular dedication. Some of the 'paradoxes' of the Gospel may perhaps belong to it, or are at any rate verified in it more literally and exactly—'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother . . . he cannot be My disciple' (Luke xiv. 26); 'Whoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other' (Matt. v. 39); 'Many are called, but few chosen' (xx. 16), etc.[1] Saints who have been eminent in mystical theology are such as St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa, and chief of all and first of all, St. John the Apostle.

As applied to the subject in hand, mystical theology would furnish us with some less evident aspects of our Lady's dignity and office, such as are not perhaps within the range of general

[1] It is dangerous, however, to put a limit to the precepts of our Lord when He is not recorded to have done so Himself, and the paradoxes would in their spirit have a general application.

apprehension, and such as there is no general obligation to appreciate or accept. But these additions are understood, or even discovered, by persons of interior mortification, and especially Religious, who have made by divine grace large progress in prayer and contemplation. Some glance into this recondite science seems proper to any sufficient exposition of the doctrine, and can hardly be amiss. Those who feel unable to follow the argument, may rest content with what has preceded. They have already got the ordinary belief and devotional exercise of the Church exposed, and that is the main concern. There may be others who would be interested in learning something of what exists in the particular vocation of the priest, the religious, the contemplative; as St. Bonaventura said: 'I learnt it before the Crucifix.' To begin, then.

The Blessed Virgin, in order to become the Mother of God, was made the Bride of the Spirit: 'That which is conceived within her is of the Holy Ghost.' If all the gifts of God come to us through Mary, the chief of God's gifts are spiritual. As against the spiritual benefaction, any temporal blessing is without validity and disappears from view. Thus though, in spite of prayers, we suffered disappointment and pain through life, yet it is understood that our Lord's promise would stand:

Spiritual gifts by Mary: the Descent of Pentecost.

'Ask and it shall be given you.' For the parallel between the giving of the earthly father and of the Heavenly, ends thus: 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?' (Luke xi. 13); no gift besides is named. The spiritual gift, the gift of the Spirit, if any and beyond any, must come to us through Mary.[1] The beginning was the Descent of Pentecost. According to the startling expression of St. John (vii. 39), 'there was no Holy Spirit yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' Now at the Descent of Pentecost, the Blessed Virgin was undoubtedly present (See Part I., p. 47). It has never been otherwise represented in Catholic tradition.[2] Her presence belongs to the miracle. How and why, wants some brief explanation.

The essence of sin is the deflection of the will. The polarisation, so to speak, is changed. Instead

[1] Not that we can never expect temporal benefits in answer to prayer, but they are subordinated. We desire God's Will and our own good, and the spiritual benefit must represent both, but the temporal need not. The father does not give his child what will be harmful to him.

[2] Failure or hesitation in recognising the truth of the case, may be partly due to our one-sided virile preconception. The Apostolic office is of a special character, not the same as the subsequent clerical, and the Twelve, though chosen to *that* office, are not the sole chosen altogether, but there are other divine elections, *e.g.*, that of the Baptist. Is it, then, only Apostles who are to receive the Spirit on the day of the promise?

of being centred on God, it is determined by its own appetency under external stimulus; instead of the rule of right, we get a will that has become self-will. 'Rebellion,' said the prophet Samuel (1 Kings xv. 23), 'is the sin of black magic; because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected thee.' God and evil are contrary, like sweet and bitter, or substance and void; there is no possible contact. Thus the soul in sin is out of relation to God, and that not because God turns away from His creature, but because the soul has turned away from Him; the aversion is the sinner's own act. Meanwhile the soul, thus disconnected from the Source of good, cannot of itself restore its proper connection; in the language of St. Paul, it is 'taken captive,' it is 'sold into slavery'; the restoration can only be effected by divine grace, and of this it has become incapable. Such terrible *impasse*, brought about by the sin of our first parents, was overcome in the Divine Counsels through the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Son of God, who had not, and could not have, that incapacity and disconnection. Atonement was made, and human nature was restored to its original correspondence with Divinity.

But, in the first place, in order that this should be done, the Son must take human nature. And yet, once more, His Deity could not have contact

—could not by a more than physical negation—with evil. In the fulness of time there was found the possibility of a human child that could be conceived without sin by divine election, and our Lord was born of Mary Immaculate (See the next chapter). But even then the union was immediately restored for the one Man alone, the Only-Begotten who had made the Atonement, and others were to partake of the benefit of the Sacrifice that He had made by being incorporated in Him. It does not suffice, however efficacious, that He represents the human race—the second Adam. There is more. In the New Testament we are perpetually meeting with the expression 'in Christ,' as applied to Christians, and as their proper description (John xv. 4; Acts xiii. 39; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. v. 6; Eph. i. 3–12; Phil. iii. 9; 1 Petr. v. 10; 1 John ii. 28, v. 20, etc.).[1] St. Paul uses in one place the unexpected variation, 'of His flesh and of His bones' (Eph. v. 30). This incorporation is effected by means of the Sacraments. 'As many of you as were baptised into Christ, clothed yourselves with Christ' (Gal. iii. 27); 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me' (John vi. 56).[2] But the virtue of the Sacraments is

[1] The preposition is, however, sometimes otherwise rendered in versions through miscomprehension.

[2] Protestants would give the account of the text, only

through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who had therefore to become abiding in the Church. At once the *impasse* reappears. How is the Spirit to be given where there is admixture of sin? The correspondence was found a second time in the Blessed Virgin, who had already (at the Annunciation) received the Holy Spirit, and who was full of grace, so that as the Son of God was incarnate *by* her, so the Spirit might be given to the Church *with* her—'with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus' (Acts i. 14). Her presence was the necessary condition of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, to bring the Divine Fire into the upper room at all. 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit,' said our Lord to the assembled disciples after His Resurrection, when He 'breathed upon them' (John xx. 22).[1] But this was the divine fiat and promise. It did

less definitely. For them the incorporation is effected by no outward act, but takes place in the consciousness of the believer through an interior act of faith. It would be hard to discover any warrant in Scripture or Tradition for this version. In Scripture the profession of faith in Christ is always immediately followed by Baptism (Acts ii. 38; xvi. 33; xviii. 8; xxii. 16, etc.). But an act of faith alone might suffice when Baptism was precluded, just as it is said that an act of contrition will suffice when the Sacrament of Penance cannot be had. Either case, however, is of the rarest, and belongs to ritual casuistry.

[1] There does not appear to be any evidence that the assembly consisted of the Eleven alone. Nor is Mary absent because unmentioned, though she certainly may be absent. See Part I., chap. iii. p. 47.

not take effect till Pentecost was come and the Mother of Jesus was there making the correspondence.

As at Pentecost through her presence, so subsequently through her investiture and office. The spiritual powers and prerogatives of the Church were purchased for us by the Precious Blood of Christ. But their persistence is maintained by the patronage of the Queen of Heaven—'we fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God.' The gifts of the Spirit come to us through Mary, whom He made His Bride. They are 'new every morning'; they do not fail. Certainly, being such as we are, we may therefore adore the Divine Mercy. Of the fallen Church of Jerusalem God said, in the prophecy of Ezechiel, that 'though Noe, Daniel and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their justice' (Ezech. xiv. 14, 20)—their sanctity should not avail to save the Church. The Christian vineyard is watered by the blood of Martyrs, and its tillage is the pains of Confessors. The bride of the Lamb is arrayed in fine linen, pure and bright, 'and the fine linen is the justice of Saints' (Apoc. xix. 8). Of both Martyrs and Confessors, of all Saints, Mary is Queen. The Church of Christ is preserved from falling, in accordance with the divine promise and covenant, through the intercession of Mary:

The Papal Infallibility.

'*ut Genitricis Domini nostri intercessione salvemur.*'[1] More important for the edification of the Church than even the promise to St. Peter: 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not' (Luke xxii. 32), and no Catholic will say otherwise—*more* important is the designation of the Mother of Christendom. The providence of God over His people to preserve the integrity of the tradition, the divine assistance granted to the Vicar of Christ in his office, is within the range of the sovereignty of Mary. Over and over again in the history of Papal rescripts has the supreme Pontiff—and always in proportion to his piety and worthiness—professed himself the client of Mary, and claimed in an especial degree her patronage and protection in his pastoral oversight.

The Priesthood and the Mass.

Similarly the priest does not receive his commission from our Lady, nor does it reach him through her. But originally for perseverance in his vocation, and subsequently for the due exercise of the sacerdotal office, he depends upon her favour and aid. The devout priest may pray before saying Mass: *Sicut dulcissimo Filio tuo in cruce pendenti adstitisti, ita et mihi misero peccatori, et sacerdotibus omnibus hic et in tota*

[1] Proper of the Feast of the Assumption: 'that we may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of our Lord.'

*sancta Ecclesia offerentibus, clementer adsistere digneris.*[1] In the Mass of her Nativity his prayer before offering is that 'He who was born of a Virgin may on the birthday of His Mother purge us of our offences and make our offering acceptable to God.'

It has been recently ruled by authority to be erroneous to suppose that Mary has any part in the Sacred Host, as though the Body and Blood of Christ being originally derived from her, she had some part in them sacramentally as well as naturally. An error, however, may often point to a truth of which it is the exaggeration or perversion. The profession of faith drawn up by Pope Gregory VII., which the heretic Berengarius was induced to subscribe, declared that the bread of the Sacrament was changed by consecration into the Body of Christ 'which was born of the Virgin.'[2] Mary is invoked by the priest twice in the Canon of the Mass, once immediately before he consecrates, and again immediately before he communicates. In addition to this, except on the occasion of some particular Feast, in the Sunday and Ferial Mass, he appends to

[1] Indulgenced by Pope Leo XIII.: 'As thou didst stand beside Thy Son as He hung upon the Cross, so mercifully deign to stand beside me a miserable sinner, and beside all priests who offer sacrifice here and in all holy Church.'

[2] Identically St. Ambrose (Lambertini, *De Canon. Sanct. Lib.* iv. *c.* 31).

the 'Prayer,' to the 'Secret' Prayer, and to the 'Post-Communion' Prayer a petition directly in commemoration of the Blessed Virgin. The Mother of God Incarnate has an interest in the making of the Body of Christ in the Mass reflected from that which she took in the conception and birth of the holy Babe; she adores principally and primarily, with Saints and Angels and with all the faithful, before the Altar, as she adored beside the Manger in Bethlehem; nay, she stands beside the Altar as she stood beside the Cross. Mary is not separate from the Sacrifice of the Mass any more than from the Sacrifice of Calvary; she has just as much—and just as little—part in one as in the other. But for the priest who offers and for the faithful who adore Mary is Advocate and Helper. When the Body of the Lord is given in Holy Communion, as when it was given in the Nativity, Mary is there. If all the gifts of God come to us through Mary, this supreme gift is not apart from the Mother of Divine Grace. It was once said: 'When I go to Holy Communion, I put our Lady on my right hand and my Guardian Angel on my left.' The prayer of devout souls, of those who cultivate the hidden life of union with God, is: 'Hail, Mary, the Lord is with thee'; not once and again, but always; with thee upon His Altar Throne.

A second topic, which naturally succeeds, is this. As devotion to Mary and appreciation of her office belong to Catholic loyalty; and as failure in devotion and making less of her, denote or hasten retrogression; so one would imagine that mystical theology in the religious study and meditation of dedicated lives would be able to make addition to what is generally discerned about our Lady, about her glorified person, as she now reigns and ranks highest over all in the radiance of heaven. In the growth and expansion of the Christian life, just as in the development of the Christian creed, the greatness of Mary appears ever larger, and that without departing from the traditional truth of fact, and without sacrificing for a moment the beauty of the traditional delineation—'Mary kept all these words, pondering over them in her heart.' Mary does not change by becoming Queen, but Queen she is more and more discerned to be.

Mary Diva.

The notion of sanctity, and indeed the condition of human regeneration, as just explained, is a *deification* of human nature (the word is not at all too strong). We are to 'grow into the measure of the maturity of Christ' (Eph. iv. 13). We are to be 'clothed with Christ' (Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27). The unity of Christians in Christ is paralleled with the unity of the Godhead: 'As thou, Father, art in Me and I in

Thee, that they may be one in Us' (John xvii. 21), and this unity is through the interpenetration of humanity by the Divine Nature: 'I in them and thou in me' (ver. 23). We partake of the Body and Blood of Christ and thus 'dwell in Him and He in us' (vi. 56). St. Paul says boldly: 'Now not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20). The attainment is various and relative. In the higher manifestations of sanctity it is carried to a marvellous reproduction. The Saints give partial transcripts of the character of our Lord; St. John the Apostle with his 'Love one another,' St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua; and let not women be left out—one hardly dares prefer any—but St. Gertrude, St. Rose of Lima. 'You received me,' writes St. Paul (Gal. iv. 14), 'as Christ Jesus.' Thus the veneration we yield to Saints is in reality yielded to the Deity manifested in them: '*Laudate Dominum in Sanctis.*'[1]

Obviously such account must apply chiefly and in the highest degree to the Queen of Saints. The degree in which Mary attains to union with Deity is beyond what we can comprehend, as the manner of that union for the glorified spirit is unknown. But it is very fairly gauged by an analogy open to us. With the Nestorianism of Protestant belief, and especially in its modern decadence, our Lord has become a human creature

[1] 'Praise the Lord in His Saints.'

irradiated and permeated by Deity—nothing more. The notion which the Protestant forms of the Son of God, transcendently above our stature because so near the divine, is very fairly the account of the glory of 'the King's Daughter.'[1] Mary in her glory, while still the handmaid of the Lord, has the rays of Deity reflected from every portion of her being, as the moon reflects the sun's light. She is *Diva*, divine. We have no word in Latin or in English to express a union which is not unity, a divinity which is communicated but not shared. But the subtlety of the Greek language, which is selected by the providence of God for theological expression, has the distinction. Mary is not *θεά* but *θεία*. Or truly and really, as the queens of the ancient world were styled in compliment, she is *δῖα γυναικῶν*—the 'blessed among women.' When a Catholic is accused of 'worshipping' the Virgin Mary, let him not be ashamed. He does worship—the Deity with which she is filled. Of lesser Saints it is said even upon earth that they were 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (Luke i. 15; Acts iv. 8); xiii. 9, etc.), and how much more, perennially and essentially, Mary in heaven!

[1] This is almost certainly what lay at the back of Cardinal Newman's (Protestant) explanation; above, p. 152, note. He wrote polemically, and his account of the early Church was a parable to apply to the Protestant surroundings of his own time and country.

We should not be cautious or chary of speech about our Lady. We live in the midst of a generation that is hostile to the Catholic faith, and both persecutes and derides it; the pollution of Protestantism has not yet exhaled itself away. The more, and not the less, should we constantly proclaim Mary Mother of God and Queen of all. Then it will perhaps some day be understood—or if not, that makes no difference—what is the transcendence of God in the Christian Revelation. God, then, does not become less God by taking human flesh, but when (by the Incarnation) the veil is taken away, we are more sensibly awed than before. But consider the obscurer vision of the Mosaic covenant, the epoch of the 'letter,' the 'shadow,' the 'figure,' only, when Moses 'hid his face' (Exod. iii. 6), when Elijah 'wrapped his face in his mantle' (3 Kings xix. 13), and earlier yet the patriarch Job confessing: 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes' (Job xlii. 5, 6). Heaven is God's throne and the earth His footstool. God is immeasurable, ageless, all-lovely and all-wise; GOD IS SPIRIT, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth, God who has become man—*et homo factus est ex Maria Virgine.* Mary said: '*Magnificat anima mea Dominum,*'

and we do not glorify God by holding aloof from her. How we may derogate from God's glory is by leaving out Mary altogether, and then putting the Incarnate Word on the level that His Mother should occupy, the pediment of a deified man.

Impossible to conceive what the glory of Mary is. How are we to do it? If we, erring, futile, ordinary Christians, are to be 'completed up to all the completion of God' (πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Eph. iii. 19), what is it to be? In the end, when all is fulfilled, and God is 'all in all'? (1 Cor. xv. 24–28). And here is no sinner; the sole child of Adam, save and except the Incarnate Word her Son, who never knew sin; a human nature as it was first formed and designed by its Creator; lily unsmirched, a virgin clay, made for the Potter's use; chosen, elect, finding favour with God, made Mother of God; whom the kisses of the God-Babe have kissed—what is she? If we are to have our life in God, what is she, who never had it else; what from the beginning, what now, where the eternal melodies are heard, sunned by the sunshine of God, face to face? *Mater divinae gratiae, diva Maria.*[1]

The third topic is closely connected. In mystical theology the Queenship of Mary grows larger; similarly, we should opine, her Maternity.

[1] 'Mother of divine grace'—*diva Maria* is untranslatable —'Mary divine.'

## *MARY IN MYSTICAL THEOLOGY*

In previous chapters it has been suggested that Mary is originally Queen in the royal line of Judah, being the Mother of Him who was 'born King of the Jews,' but that, further and beyond, inasmuch as Messiah the King 'sits upon the throne of His father David and shall rule over the house of David for ever and of His kingdom there shall be no end,' so Mary, being thus Mother of the eternal King, transcends the earthly limitations and is Queen of heaven as well as queen on earth. The same transcendence follows, or rather precedes, regarding her Motherhood. Though this is not needful for us to know. Though for our concern it suffices that she is Mother of God, and by adoption and by divine designation our Mother. But to the contemplative her Mother's glory in her exaltation is beyond this. As Mother of God—*Mater Creatoris*—her Motherhood attains a universal validity. She is not only 'a mother in Israel' (Judges v. 7), not only 'the mother of all living,' the antitypal Eve (Gen. iii. 20), but universal Mother—*Mater mundi*. What this should mean in virtue and effect, as related to the potencies and powers of worlds upon worlds, the natural and supernatural, the changing and the eternal, the individual and the archetype, the fleeting forms of life and the laws of being, the temporal and the absolute, the kingdom of

Mater Mundi.

nature and the kingdom of grace—*quando praeparabat caelos, aderam; quando certa lege et gyro vallabat abyssos . . . cum eo eram cuncta componens*[1]—of this we can only gain a dim and shadowy prospect. But evidently the maternal character, the maternal Idea, thus attains its apotheosis and is crowned as supreme constituent under God of all being. The woman, who 'brought forth a man-child'[2]—and her offspring was the All-Ruler upon the Throne of God (Apoc. xii. 5)—is exalted to the heaven of heavens, clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, nearest the Throne. To the contemplative it is a marvellous revelation, clearing away many shadows, satisfying many doubts and questionings of the soul that would search into the deep things of God. It is consonant with the rest. 'Weak things of the world has God chosen to confound the things that are mighty' (1 Cor. i. 27). God is love (1 John iv. 16), and the nearest to God according to His own declaration (Is. xlix. 15) is the love of the mother. If God were power or wisdom or beauty, it might not be

[1] 'When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when with certain law and compass He enclosed the depths. . . I was with Him forming all things.'

[2] *υἱὸν ἄρρεν*. This, which is with St. John 'a great wonder in heaven,' is perhaps the same as the 'new thing upon the earth' of Jeremias (xxxi. 22), though whether the prophet understood the intention and fulfilment of what he wrote, is there by no means sure (See Matt. xiii. 17).

so; but He is not these; He possesses all these, but He is love; so the Mother of God is Mary. The greatest (1 Cor. xiii. 13) is the mother's love.

Let the social philosopher, who argues on sexual relativity and balances between the superiority of one or the equality of both, let him ponder on this. Let him do nothing of the kind. It is hidden from him. 'I confess to Thee,' exclaims our Lord (Matt. xi. 25), 'to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent.' Only in the light of the Revelation of God, only in the Church of Christ, is truth and peace. We reverence womanhood, motherhood, and the woman and mother has reverence for herself, when Mary's throne is honoured. *Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu laetitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri; O Maria, mater clementissima, virgo prudentissima, ora pro nobis et intercede pro nobis ad Dominum Jesum Christum.*[1]

It remains to depict two aspects of our Lady's prerogative, which are illustrative and may have special interest as being more decidedly off the line. As the glory of Mary appears greater with our spiritual growth, so is

Speculum Justitiae.[2]

[1] 'Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou the honouring of our people; oh, Mary, mother most merciful, virgin most prudent, pray for us and intercede for us with Jesus Christ our Lord.'

[2] Mirror of Justice.

her power to aid us more largely revealed. We depend upon her not only for pardon through her advocacy, but also for progress in justice. Our Lord has indeed redeemed us; He has revealed to us our Father in heaven; He has instructed His disciples both in religious doctrine and in social virtue—'a new commandment I give you.' He lived for thirty-three years on earth, and the record of His life, such record as we possess, among other equally beneficent designs in its bestowal, bore on its face this evangel, that Christ is our Pattern. The imitation of Christ is the whole of Christian virtue.

But, in the first place, there are phases of the life of the Son of God which we should not dare to set ourselves to imitate—His intimate communion with His Father, His manifestation of divine power. Although by free gift of God these traits also may be exemplified in elect servants: 'Greater works than these shall he do who believes in Me' (John xiv. 12). 'If a man love Me . . . My Father will love him and We will come to him' (ver. 23). And, secondly, the justice of Christ is no doubt our model, the type of perfection, the standard by which to approve and condemn; encouraging to fresh effort, lifting to further heights, keeping the torch aflame; and while we strive we worship—*laborare est orare.* But the model cannot be

reproduced. 'As I have loved you, that you also love one another' (xiii. 34)—impossible. 'Be perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect' (Matt. v. 48)—impossible again. Meanwhile the very excellence of a moral standard is that it should be unattainable. Once attain, and you may sit with folded hands henceforward. But health is only maintained by activity, and conflict is the condition of human probation. One may say, with Aristotle, that moral virtue is not a perfection but a process; justice, paradoxically, is not itself, but its pursuit. At least, this is so for human nature in its existing imperfection. The imitation of Christ is thus, designedly and for our good, unattainable.

We may, then, approach the problem of life from another side and consider with ourselves how, failing to attain, being 'unprofitable' servants, we may at least come nearer to our Lord and win His gracious regard. For it is only by His grace that we can in any measure follow the pattern of His life. Now nearest to the Heart of Jesus beyond all question was His Mother. The more we can resemble her, the nearer we shall be. It is true that there is a similar difficulty as before, that neither can we really hope to attain her devotion, her humility, her singleness and simplicity of heart. But it is possible by prayer and sustained recollection to associate

ourselves so closely with the Mother of God that she is able to impart to us something of her own nature. A secret lore known to the hidden life. For constant association everywhere produces a certain resemblance of character. Thus likeness of feature is inherited, but we are unable to say how much likeness of disposition, manner, even speech, is so; how much may be due to the constant intercourse and association of early years. Even feature, it is said, becomes modified as thought and feeling, and thus expression, run on similar lines; married people are sometimes seen to have grown like each other.

We should endeavour, then, to live as much as possible with Mary. To the ordinary mind it may seem mere self-delusion and religious eccentricity to imagine that anyone can really do so. But the argument no longer regards the ordinary experience, and there are those who live so much in the other world—'our conversation is in heaven' (Phil. iii. 20)—that the Saints are quite as real personages to them as are their earthly acquaintances; they have distinct personalities, and are distinguishable through familiarity one from another. With Mary the relation is constant and intimate beyond what is held towards other Saints. She is continually approached for help and succour; her patronage is sought; the daily meditation of her clients dwells upon her story

and the record of her acts and favours. She becomes part of their life, her august personality grows into clearer knowledge, and in contact with her their characters are altered and receive some impress of her own. Is this unlikely? Is it unreal? The contemplative do not think so; they are sure of the contrary. And they are not in other relations of life either eccentric or under delusion. At any rate it is with them that we are now concerned. Observe that the cultivation of Mary's society has all along the design of making us more perfectly to be followers of our Lord. Do we rather say that our life should be hid with Christ in God? But if we would be with Christ we must live with Mary. 'Hail, Mary, the Lord is with thee.'

The remaining prerogative may appear to be ascribed through speculative reflection rather than through devout study, but illustrates nevertheless a particular point. In devotion the soul not only learns to discern better, but it finds new things, new relations, new mysteries, coming within its view. The poet speaks of the wonders of the Paradise above, when the listening soul shall

> 'Find new knowledge at each pause,
> Or some new thing to know.'

No one disputes that the appearances of our Lady have been more frequent in the history of

Christianity than the appearances of any other of the inhabitants of Heaven. This may be allowed to be consequent upon her sovereignty and upon her having in consequence more to do with us. It may also be allowed that our Lady is more in our mind; we are thinking more of her assistance; and in all such supernatural favours the predisposition of the recipient must be taken into account; there is a correspondence between the revelation and the receptive condition of the favoured soul to whom it is made. Just as to the Jewish prophet the word of God came in Hebrew and not in Japanese. Still, when such considerations have been admitted and allowed, it can be hardly wrong to suppose, as one reason of the greater frequency of the appearances of our Lady, that she alone is able to appear in her own shape, and her appearances are thus, if we may so express it, simplified and made more easy and natural. She alone in her Assumption has anticipated the time of the final Judgment and resurrection of the body. She alone has in heaven a bodily form in which to appear to us.

Lourdes.

When this is said, it does not throw doubt, it must not be imagined to throw doubt, upon the appearances of other Saints. Only in such cases the appearances are apparitions. God permits the particular Saint to appear to us with his

proper lineaments, but there is no actual body there. But when our Lady appears, it is her bodily self, as at Capharnaum or Nazareth.

Nor does it affect this explanation that the ancient patriarch Henoch, the prophet Elias, and possibly Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 6; Jude 9), were 'translated.' If they are at present in possession of their bodies, they could certainly appear by the divine permission, as does Mary; but they are not likely, being Saints of the old Covenant or anterior to it, to appear to Christians who do not look for them. Is it either altogether certain that translation and assumption are the same thing, so that the grace bestowed upon our Lady would not be unique?[1] Elias, *e.g.*, is

[1] Pre-eminently obscure is the passage in Jude (9) where the Archangel and Satan are represented as 'contending for the body of Moses.' Not, however, obscurely expressed; the obscurity belongs to the subject. The incident does not fit in with anything we have otherwise learnt and understood about the other world. Certainly 'the body of Moses' is not himself. As 'no one knows of his sepulchre,' it is possible to understand that the body is removed beyond the limits of earth. But still separated from the soul, equally as in a natural demise. Perhaps, then, in 'translations,' as of Elias, death having already taken place (as plainly to be inferred from 4 Kings ii. 9–12; the prophet, while translated, has no voice to answer his follower), it is only that the body is removed from outrage, or it may be from idolatrous veneration (4 Kings xviii. 4). The body is reserved in some sacred place—περισκέπτῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ—till the Judgment. The 'dispute' concerned the fact that Moses had 'trespassed' (Deut. xxxii. 51) and had been refused the Promised Land—had been rejected so far accordingly.

seen to be carried up in the chariot of fire, and certainly then his body is not left for burial. But whether it reaches heaven is a further particular, and the record hardly seems to take it into account. The Assumption of Mary follows upon the Resurrection and Ascension of her divine Son, and is understood in the Church to imply that her immaculate body was admitted within the eternal Gates that open first to receive the Body of Christ victorious over death and the grave. The *first* human form that appears in heaven is that which the Son of God has taken upon Himself. The *second* is that of the Mother of God. It seems at least antecedently probable.

Some similar rationale must be given of what St. Matthew (xxvii. 52) records among the portents following upon the expiry of our Saviour, that 'the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were

His body, as a body of sinful flesh, might therefore be argued to have no claim to that holy keeping, but to belong to Satan, anticipating and expecting the adjudgment of the soul also to him. Satan is 'the accuser' (etymologically), and though the future is not known to him, he is ready to dispute for any doubtful case, or such as he can make doubtful, as, *e.g.*, Job (Job i. 11). As to a distinction between assumption and translation, St. John Damascene, apostrophising our Lady, writes (*Hom.* 11): 'Thou hast not gone up to heaven as Elias did, but didst penetrate even to the royal throne of thy Son'—*οὐχ ὡς ὁ Ἠλίας ὡς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐλήλυθας, ἀλλ' ἕως αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Υἱοῦ σου ἔφθασας.*

opened, and many bodies of the Saints that slept arose, and coming out of their graves after His Resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.' These Saints would be also pre-Christian. And it does not seem that anything beyond apparitions is intended here either.[1] The Saints appeared in their bodily lineaments but without any resurrection of their bodies. For surely it is inadmissible to suppose that the Resurrection of our Lord was only one out of many that occurred at the same time and of precisely similar character, the dead person stepping alive out of his grave.[2] Even if our Lord was the first to rise, and the other resurrections, coming after His, might be presumed to be achieved by His prior victory over death, yet surely the issue is then confused. There would be the same objection to be taken regarding the

[1] It is the Saints and not their bodies that come out of the graves (ἐξελθόντες not ἐξελθόντα). The opening of the graves appears unmistakably to be connected with the earthquake and the rending of the rocks, portents which take place at the moment of our Lord's expiry. Thus the opening of the graves cannot be the opportunity of the Saints coming out of them, which did not take place till the Sunday. The rising of the bodies then resolves itself into bodily forms appearing, and the opening of the graves accompanies the rending of the rocks and nothing further. Lastly, one must read the Gospel as a narrative and not as a *précis* of facts in a legal inquiry.

[2] The subsequent ascensions of these Saints, if their bodies ever really reached heaven, would seem to deserve to be recorded. And there is nothing of the kind.

Resurrection as that which might be brought in the pagan world regarding the Birth of our Lord from a Virgin Mother (see Pt. I. p. 19), namely, that others had been similarly born; and this objection now launched with the additional force that, while any tangible evidence of such births was lacking, the resurrections were established and admitted by Christians themselves. The truth most probably is that there has been only one Resurrection, that of Jesus, and one Assumption, that of Mary. And when Mary appears in subsequent times, there is this special joy and marvel attaching to it, that her actual self is beheld.

If, then, the appearances of our Lady are thus real appearances and not apparitions, may it be supposed that among the royal prerogatives bestowed upon the Queen of heaven is the power of appearing at will (that is, in our way of speaking; but the will of the inhabitants of heaven is identical with the Will of God and does not outrun it. See chap. iv. p. 166)? In the case of the apparition of any other Saint, there is required a co-ordinate appointment of divine favour, that a bodily form should be beheld by those to whom the apparition is granted. But if Mary may appear at any time, the entire procedure is her own. If she appears, it is Mary, and her body belongs to her, is inseparable from

her. This simplicity of her appearances would, then, further account for their comparative frequency. The speculation, if it is a speculation, belongs to the higher study of the glories of Mary, and is properly included among the discoveries of mystical theology.

There is no precise limit to be set to the fresh particulars concerning the person and prerogatives of our Lady which may be distinguished, so soon as we go beyond her relation to the leading and essential doctrines of Christianity. Mary is the Mother of God, and some inevitable deductions are seen to follow upon that title. But if we inquire what Mary is besides this, there is much to discover, there are things of large worth and interest, and there are lesser things. The object of the present chapter has been to make a selection, to give a sufficient number of examples, to put into the picture some of the added effects that spiritual learning and piety have discerned, beyond the ordinary teaching of the Church and yet without wandering from the tradition; at the same time by the examples given, by their beauty and devotional promise, to make apology, if such were needed, for this esoteric species of doctrine that prayer and meditation may reach—doctrine sometimes viewed with hesitation, and perhaps not unjustly, within the Church, and certainly denounced

and reprobated by the world outside beyond all justice and reason. There is nothing, or there is hardly anything, in this chapter which a Catholic is required to believe, or for which the Church as a whole makes itself responsible. You might reject all or nearly all that has been said here and remain a Catholic. But are we then debarred from learning from the meditations of holy persons, and are they forbidden to meditate upon heavenly things and to record for our benefit what they have been permitted to discern?

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN

THE Immaculate Conception is the beginning of everything concerning our Lady. But it is also at the present Christian era in another aspect the end. The declaration of the Immaculate Conception was the last large decision of Catholic faith that the Church has reached through the centuries, comparable with and recalling those of her past eventful history. When Pope Pius IX., in 1854, made the proclamation, it carried, as if it had been the fourth or fifth century, confusion to 'false brethren' everywhere. The world had its usual say. The Church, it would seem, in all previous pronouncements, had been discreet and reasonable, though not free from error; but this was against all the traditions of ecclesiastical procedure; the largeness and breadth, the dignity, of the Church was now gone. The Church, or rather the Pope, had made a tactical blunder; she had hastened her decadence; for no enlightened and rational mind could any longer have anything to do with her.

The Declaration of 1854.

Former decisions of Councils, even the declaration of Trent in favour of Transubstantiation, had some pretence of conformity to Scripture and of being mere development and further determination of current doctrine; but this was an absolute innovation and novelty; this had not been the decision of a Council, but the autocratic decree of the reigning Pope. If the Church might require belief in anything whatever that any ambitious and assertive section within her obedience, obtaining the ear of a Pope, might thrust upon her, *actum est de republica*; the best men would abandon her immediately. The Protestant world in its day had accused her of superstition and idolatry, of Mariolatry; the charge was polemical and *ex parte*, drawn as the statement of the pursuer's case, perhaps over-drawn, at any rate admitting and expecting reply. But now there was no more doubt. 'Mother of God' at Ephesus was unfortunate, but explainable. 'Immaculate' could not be explained at all.

Such was the enlightened judgment of continental Europe, not uninteresting to the student of ecclesiastical history, reproducing the age of Cyril or of Leo. In England popular opinion rather missed the point, as it was thought that the Immaculate Conception meant the Birth of Christ from a Virgin Mother (see Pt. I. p. 101),

a tenet which now being ascertained to be Catholic was at once repudiated with all the Protestant violence and obstinacy which the English people can on occasion display. Outside popular opinion, where ignorance was less gross, English Protestants merely now despaired of Rome, and their attentions became more marked in default to the Greek schismatic Church—which belonged to 'the unchanging East,' and in which Mary was no less exalted. We did not know our part here as they did abroad, and sorely needed a prompter.

Meanwhile the Blessed Virgin had been held by Catholics to be immaculate from the earliest times, and this title was in fact no novelty but traditional. St. Augustine [1] had refused to allow any mention of sin in connection with the Mother of God. St. Ephrem [2] had named her Immaculate many times over; St. Epiphanius [3] St. Ambrose,[4] etc., had given her the name. The Liturgy of St. James,[5] perhaps the earliest of the Liturgies and looking back to Apostolic times, commemorates her under that title. The definition added something, no doubt; it was not meaningless and idle. But it was no such

[1] *De Natura et Gratia*, c. 36.
[2] *Precationes ad Deiparam*, iv. *init.*, etc.
[3] *Hæres*, 78. [4] *Serm.* 22, *in Psalm.* 118.
[5] τῆς παναγίας, ἀχράντου, καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας μνημονεύσαντες. I cannot distinguish between 'undefiled' and 'immaculate.'

innovation as supposed. It did not make Mary immaculate for the faith of Christendom; she was that already and had been all along. It only fixed the time when her sinlessness began to be, or rather declared that there was no time when it was not; Mary was immaculate *from her conception*. The three last words express the only thing that was ever disputed and the only thing that was fifty years ago defined. And even this had not been really disputed, as shall be presently shown.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady does no more than define the suggestion of the Gospel (see Pt. I. p. 30). Mary is *the* Virgin, pre-eminently virgin, distinguished by the name, and thence *Virgo virginum*, immaculate. For if not immaculate, then it might seem that some other might equal or surpass her. Supposing, *e.g.*, the patriarch Job (Job i. 1, 22). Or perhaps St. John Baptist, the commonly accepted account of whom, or at least one account, makes him born without original sin through the Visitation of our Lady (Luke i. 44. Cp. Matt. xi. 11). It is said of St. Dominic, and possibly of some other Saint, that he never actually committed sin. The point is not whether these presumptions are true, but whether they might be, whether it is conceivable that they should be, if not in these examples, yet

possibly in others; whether, even without being true, they could possibly be so considered in the Church. If our Lady has on her any the faintest shade of sin (which St. Augustine, we observe, would not allow her to have), then she need not be, she need not be believed to be, the supreme Virgin. But her supremacy is confessed and always was confessed. Therefore it was intended and may be safely declared, that in our belief she is immaculate.

The same conclusion is reached equally by another route. Why is the Mother of God to be a Virgin, as the inspired record certainly declares her to be? For the reason that the maiden estate is a higher rank in religion than the other. Marriage is indeed honourable (Hebr. xiii. 4), according to the law of God (Matt. xix. 4), and consecrated by the Sacrament (Eph. v. 32). Nevertheless the Religious is called to virginity. The Monk and the Nun give themselves to God wholly, keeping nothing back; that is their vocation. The Protestant indeed imagines and maintains that there is nothing of higher virtue than the married condition, the home life and conjugal fidelity. But that is not the truth. It is not what St. Paul is commissioned to teach as Christian doctrine. 'The unmarried woman,' he writes (1 Cor. vii. 34), 'cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body

and in spirit; but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.' Complete dedication, entire dedication, body soul and spirit given wholly to God, involves the severance of all other ties (Luke xiv. 26). At any rate it involves the abnegation of so absorbing a tie as that of sexual union, the more absorbing the more virtuous and true. The Mother of God is wholly dedicated, and therefore she is the Virgin—*Virgo purissima*, the most pure Virgin. The dedication is not perfect if the faintest shadow or fleck of sin is present. 'Whoever commits sin,' says our Lord (John viii. 34), 'is the servant of sin.' And of original sin St. Paul writes in the fearful language of Rom. vii. 21–24. Obviously, logically, instinctively, this will not do for the Mother of God. Let it be only the flimsiest bondage, let it be but a microbe infection of that 'body of death,' and the dedication has therewith a flaw. If Mary is the Virgin-Mother, as she is, as it is implied that she was obliged to be, then she is also immaculate—*sine labe originali concepta*.[1] She has nothing to do with sin at all. The hereditary transmission, by interference of the divine election, was cut off, and Mary goes back to Eve who knew no shame (Gen. ii. 25).

Mary was a Jewess, one of the Chosen People

[1] 'Conceived without original stain.'

who alone in pre-Christian times had access to any covenanted grace of God. As a people and in spite of their repeated faithlessness, the Jews were thus spiritually raised above others. Mary also belonged to the lineage of David. Neither one nor the other circumstance was immaterial. For Christ was to be born King of the Jews and the Son of David. It may be observed, then, that though the election of God is free, yet it generally follows along with a natural predisposition, that is to say, disturbs in a minimum degree the operation of the natural law, which is not less according to the mind of the Almighty than the supernatural prescission. Thus, *e.g.*, the inspired Evangelists are those who were best qualified by nature for their task among Apostles or the companions of Apostles. Thus again, as a general rule, though there are certainly numerous exceptions, persons who exhibit in their lives the notes of Sanctity, and who are subsequently raised to the Church's altars, have been possessed of a certain degree of education, often even of culture, without which any extraordinary gifts would be less easily put to use. The explanation need not be that Saints of obscure birth find a difficulty in obtaining canonisation, though this may also be true.[1] But

Natural selection of the Mother of God.

[1] *Tardius exsurgunt quorum virtutibus obstat Res angusta*

the natural qualifications are more likely to be present in families that have better opportunities. To God Elizabeth, queen of Hungary, is plain Elizabeth, but this Elizabeth is as a human creature more advanced than Elizabeth the dairymaid. God can make either a Saint, according to His election and foreknowledge; but the first Elizabeth is so made with less disturbance of the natural order. If there is anything in this suggestion—and even if there is nothing—it must be a most fortunate conjunction of circumstances when the Queen of Saints might appear. In our way of speaking, the universe anxiously expected from generation to generation the fortuitous event of a family succession of saintly personalities, which would gradually culminate in an exceptional natural disposition, with the vicious propensities reduced to vanishing point through natural selection. Both the father and mother of Mary are counted by the Church among canonised Saints. The line came direct from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and furnished such elect personalities as those of Ruth, David, Josias, Zorobabel, &c. After the overthrow of the Jewish monarchy the

*domi*—'slow rises Worth by poverty depressed.' Even in the Church to be poor is often to be undiscovered. But this is the particular desire of the Saint both in life and after.

names of Mary's progenitors have no signification for us, but we need not presume that the family therefore suffered deterioriation. On the contrary, virtue and piety have better opportunity in a humble station than upon a throne. It is no real degradation; we have not to search among the dregs of the population for the fallen royal house. St. Joseph is no ignorant peasant. To the Jew his religion was an education in itself (2 Tim. iii. 15), and St. Joseph was punctual in the observance of his religion. He is a carpenter by trade, but only as St. Paul (the pupil of Gamaliel) was a tent-maker. Handicrafts are not despised in the Palestine of our Lord's day. His cousin Elizabeth is wife of the priest Zacharias, and is surrounded with some little state (Luke i. 57–64); his own wife Mary is invited to the marriage in Cana (John ii. 1). We must rather hold that the house and lineage of David in its fallen state had all needful opportunity, and advanced in sanctity and the favour of heaven. The family attained its apogee and the second Eve was born. Mary was without taint of original sin.[1]

Not for any merit Mary could show, for it began her life, but 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand' (Rom. ix. 11).

[1] The hereditary selection did not make her immaculate, but qualified her to be made so.

Not for any merit, unless in the anticipation of Omniscience. But who would cavil? Grace is free, election is free. At least the Protestant asserts this, if he asserts nothing else. Who would cavil? Which of us can claim that any grace he has received was merited and not freely given? 'The gift of God' (Rom. vi. 23). Merit, if anywhere, to human understanding, appearing in the family rather. And this again, in reality, by divine election and in the dispensation of Providence.

Not because Mary was the supreme of God's creation, but to make her so. Purchased for her, and for us in her, by the Sacrifice of Calvary before the Sacrifice was offered. And why not? The Apostles in the Upper Room certainly partook of the Sacrifice before the Victim was slain. These anticipations do not seem discordant with justice even to human understanding, and in the grasp of the Infinite and Eternal—with whom yesterday, to-day and to-morrow are not as with us—they are still more easily acceptable. From the epoch of the Fall itself the coming of the Seed was promised, and with it the reappearance of the Woman—an Eve who should crush the serpent, avenging the Eve whom the serpent had betrayed. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive (1 Cor. xv. 22). And as it was through Eve that

Adam fell, so of Mary the Redeemer is born. The scheme of human Redemption from its very beginning, in its prophecy and promise, includes Mary.

Thus the Church applies to Mary the language in which wisdom is extolled (Prov. viii. 23): 'From eternity I was ordained, and from ancient times, before the world was made,' &c. Her Son redeemed Mary also, He died for her also—in the eternal counsels of God, with whom there is no before and after, only effect and cause. Surely this is all reasonable and deserving of consideration; in the Revelation God gave to the world, when He sent His Son, 'made of a woman,' High Priest of the new order, 'holy, undefiled, separate from sinners' (Hebr. vii. 26); separate from sinners, and yet not separate from His mother; nay, formed of her substance; she, therefore, without sin. Consider it with honesty and with solemn reverence, and you must say, It is true.

Was it ever doubted? Not at least in the general sense of Christendom. The Church declares Mary immaculate. The Church in her definitions does not invent new things; she does not add to the Revelation, but only declares what the Revelation is; she defines and does not propound. Yet if there was no dispute, how was there definition,

What Immaculate Conception is.

decision, to be made, delimitation between this and that? The explanation is that there is an ambiguity in speaking of conception—*sine labe originali concepta.* In one use of the expression, in order that Mary should be conceived without sin, her parents must be sinless, and her grandparents, and so on, in an endless retrogression. Like parent, like child. 'That which is born of the flesh (ἐκ τῆς σαρκός) is flesh' (σάρξ, John iii. 6), and St. Joachim and St. Anne had the original taint. Or again, our Lord says that it is only the good tree that can bear good fruit (Matt. vii. 17), and Mary is of the stock of Adam, which is corrupt. If Mary was born of ordinary parents, why should she not be 'a child of wrath,' as St. Paul says (Eph. ii. 3), 'like everyone else'? Some have even contended that in order to be immaculate she must not be produced as other children at all, but must have a virgin mother, which condition would also then go back endlessly through the precedent lineage! But there is another aspect of conception, if not in physiological science, yet in some other species of philosophy.

Our feelings, dispositions, mental qualities, are inherited from our progenitors, equally as are the bodily features or the bodily frame; or if not equally so, it is beyond our capacity to discern whether they are less inherited or more.

Generation is the greatest of physiological mysteries—the origination of life!—and we do not precisely know either the manner or degree in which this hereditary determination is related to the living organism. But the individualising soul, according to Christian philosophy at any rate, is a special fresh creation of God for every single human creature. The feelings, dispositions, mental qualities, thereupon, however, are things that belong to the soul (as also does the body, though to appearance less intimately; in the scholastic philosophy the soul is said to be the *form* of the body) and are appropriated by it, so that they become a part of *Me—my* feelings, &c. Though generic and inherited, yet becoming therewith individualised, obtaining an individuality, so that though I resemble my progenitors in this or that, the things are not identical in me, not the same things that were in them; I am myself and not any one of them; my feeling and intelligence are mine not theirs. This individuality of form does not prevent the mental dispositions having a generic origin. They are transmitted from parent to child, or, remaining latent in one generation, they may reappear in some more distant descendant. As much as any bodily feature; the family chin or the family self-will. Along with these inherited dispositions, then, comes 'the

body of death,' the infection of original sin; quite analogously to the inheritance of the bodily organism and of disease in that, phthisis, scrofula, lunacy. In Mary's conception alone there is a difference, and the difference consists precisely in this, that the individualising soul is guarded from contagion of that evil inheritance; that she inherits otherwise like the rest of us from her ancestry, but in that one particular respect is miraculously excepted; the entail of sin was cut off by a miracle for her alone of humankind. 'The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of God and in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.' So runs the Definition of 1854.

Early objection.

In the early times, then, Mary was held immaculate; she was without sin altogether, and therefore without original equally as without actual sin; but the idea of conception preceding birth and of its relation to the doctrine, for ages never entered into the mind of anyone. When the time came that it did enter, conception was at first understood in the first of the two senses distinguished above, and the candour and clear intelligence of the ancients immediately discerned the logical objection. They objected, and they deserve

no blame. There is neither loyalty nor disloyalty in logic. Thus St. Bernard of Clairvaux could not be imagined by anyone acquainted with his writings to be unenlightened regarding the excellency of the Mother of God or backward in devotion among her clients, yet St. Bernard rejected the Immaculate Conception. St. Thomas of Aquin, prince of philosophers of that age, may be alleged to have done the same. Our Lady, it was generally acknowledged, was born immaculate and so remained through life; there was error in defining more.

But other logical and philosophical minds insisted on defining more and denied the error. The life of every human creature had an earlier origin than had been taken into account. If the proper life of Mary had contact with sin in that earlier origin, it conflicted with the dignity of the Mother of God; she was not immaculate altogether. We may take some pride to learn that among the theological doctors who perceived this discrepancy, the earliest belonged to these islands. Duns Scotus, the Irishman, was perhaps the first to give to the true doctrine a logical statement; St. Anselm—our Archbishop though not our countryman—still earlier asserted it and became its principal promoter; an early opponent of St. Bernard's negative was the monk Nicholas of our St. Alban's Abbey.

A parallel example.

The course of the controversy is best understood and its relevance precisely gauged, when it is considered along with similar discussions that preceded it. The Hypostatic Union is a phrase of the meaning of which no one in England, beyond a small percentage of Catholics, has the remotest conception. It signifies that our Lord, while of double *nature*, the divine and human, has but a single *personality*. Like most scientific expressions of our own age, the word is Greek, and was introduced into Christian philosophy to express anything as it is in itself, independently of the properties and attributes belonging to it. Thus the hypostasis of anything inanimate is no more than its substance. But as applied to a rational living being, it became the individuality, the man himself, who possesses thought and feeling—or even flesh and blood—but is not any one of such things. But now the celebrated St. Cyril of Alexandria asserted that our Lord had a double hypostasis, and that very proposition was later declared to be heretical. Was then a Christian Saint and Doctor to be viewed as a heretic? By no means. The explanation is a simple one, that to St. Cyril the expression had not the meaning subsequently attaching to it, and that by a double hypostasis he intended nothing more than a double nature.

Indeed, taking the word in itself and apart from its theological determination, there appears to be much to say for St. Cyril's employment of it.[1]

Precisely the same thing occurs regarding the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady. Mary was held from the beginning to be immaculate, and when it was denied that she had been conceived without sin, the sense of conception was other than that which belongs to the later definition. Thus, in the sense of the definition, we may justly assert that the Immaculate Conception was never doubted or denied in the Church.

At any rate, it is only historical incompetence that represents the doctrine as brand new in the nineteenth century. The Festival of our Lady's Conception was observed in the East as

[1] In the Aristotelian logic hypostasis (*ὑπόστασις*) is the same as *τὸ ὑποκείμενον*, translated into Latin as *suppositum*, the underlying indeterminate subject which receives its determination from what may be predicated of it, and as viewed apart from every possible predicate. It is thus different from substance, *οὐσία*, which has determination, and it is the very antithesis of human personality, the ultimate and most perfect substance. But the philosophy of the Stagyrite was rather utilised by the Church than adopted by it or even adequately comprehended. Any term or expression must be understood in the sense of the writers who employ it, and there is no point in finding fault with the logic of the Church because it is not that of Aristotle, or is not accurately expressed according to his terminology.

early as the eighth, or possibly the fifth, century; there is no negative evidence to prevent our supposing it observed before. St. Anselm introduced the observance into England, and through his influence it came to Lyons, where its introduction was the occasion of St. Bernard's counter argument already mentioned. The Festival was observed in some other European countries besides, and at length, towards the close of the fourteenth century it reached Rome, and in 1476 the decree of Pope Sixtus IV. excommunicated those who declared heretical the doctrine of the *Immaculate* Conception, while still refusing to condemn the contrary opinion. This Pontiff granted an indulgence to the Feast which was confirmed by Leo X. Then again, the irregular Council of Basle in 1439 declared for the doctrine, and its decree was adopted and promulgated by that of Avignon eighteen years later, in which the Holy See was represented. The Office of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was appointed for the universal Church by Pope St. Pius V., who also condemned the proposition that our Lady was not exempt from original sin. Alexander VII. in the seventeenth century asserted the doctrine and anticipated the language of the Definition of the nineteenth.

The doctrine neither novel,

So much for novelty. The insinuation of

arbitrariness or merely sectional support is answered with even greater ease. Petitions for the definition were numerous and urgent from every quarter during the Pontificate of Gregory XVI., and Pius IX. soon after his accession appointed a Commission to examine and report on the subject, and addressed from his exile at Gaeta an Encyclical Letter to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic world to learn the sentiment of every diocese. Finally the Pope assembled 150 Archbishops and Bishops in Rome from the most varied quarters of the globe, before whom he laid the Commission's report. The Commission reported favourably, the 603 replies to the Encyclical were favourable, the informal Council (as we may term it, and in the early centuries its numbers were scarcely exceeded by Councils that were accepted as ecumenical) approved and petitioned that the Pope should proclaim the dogma. That is the real account. It was the voice of Christendom that asserted the Immaculate Conception of Mary. *Securus judicat orbis.*

nor arbitrarily imposed.

There are still remaining, however, one or two argumentative objections, or at least speculative doubts, or let us say curious questions, that demand some notice and reply. It may not unreasonably strike anyone of us with

astonishment and awaken our curiosity, when a pronouncement of such solemnity and importance was delayed for 1800 years after the first promulgation of the Christian faith. St. Bridget represents that our Lady revealed to her the future definition, and explained that it was delayed in order that her clients might have the opportunity of exhibiting their ardour in her cause. As Inkermann was said to have been a soldiers' battle, so we may assert of the belief in the Immaculate Conception—quite contrary to the representations of the hostile outer world—that its triumph was the work of the faithful at large. The belief grew up in isolated dioceses and in distant provinces without the instigation or even approbation of the Holy See, which tardily followed after ; it was not promoted by Bishops and Divines more than by obscure Religious and the general devotion. When the dogma was finally declared, it was in consequence of a growing volume of appeal that would not be silenced, the voice of a great multitude, like the tempest in pine-clad hills, from age to age as the centuries passed away. There is nothing with which it could be paralleled or compared in the history of Christianity, nothing of such long persistency or of such unanimous acclaim. The decisions of Councils in former ages, decisions

Late postponement of the Definition.

of the most vital consequence and of imperative demand, had frequently riven the Church in twain. This declaration cut off no cankered branch at all.

But the pronouncement is declared important. In what, we may ask—if the history of the dogma has been rightly reviewed—in what lay the particular importance of formally enunciating it? But in reality, the same cavil may be raised, and has actually been raised, about almost any other article of Christian belief. Theological and ecclesiastical definitions very generally concern questions of somewhat narrow detail—'homoousios' instead of 'homoiousios;' 'proceeding from' instead of 'through' the Son—and naturally so, because the Revelation in its general terms is plain and indisputable as delivered. Thus the definitions may well be done without, and are in fact quite happily done without, for long periods, until some day the slight difference has hardened and become sharp division. Pope Honorius I. in the seventh century essayed to impose silence on the Monothelite controversy,[1] as did Pope Sixtus IV. in the fifteenth on the dispute over the Immaculate Conception. In

Ground of its importance.

[1] It does not appear that the Pope ever expressed his acceptance of the opinion subsequently condemned; the scandal was rather that he allowed at all its assertion.

the earlier centuries before Pope Honorius no one needed to be a worse Christian for not knowing whether our Lord possessed a single or a double will, and there was hardly anyone who had ever thought about it. But the day came when this was asserted here and that asserted there, and the matter was grave, because if our Lord had no human will, then He had not truly taken our nature. Just so Mary was always immaculate,[1] no one dreamed of anything else, and it mattered little what the explanation was, because none was sought. But the issue of her immaculate *conception* was presently raised, and even then decision of the point was nothing urgent, because both sides in the controversy were agreed upon the same conclusion. Decision was finally taken, because devotion grew, and because the number of those who were jealous for the honour of the Mother of God in this particular was become so largely preponderant in Christendom. Otherwise the matter in dispute might appear at first a somewhat restricted one, and the real effect of the definition has been to proclaim Mary immaculate —which did not need to be defined because it

[1] The dogma is perhaps accepted by Mahomet (*Koran, Sura* 3, Arabic version), and by Luther (*Postillae*, p. 336. Ed. 1535); or at least Mary is allowed the same pre-eminence in sanctity that the Church assigned her.

was never disputed—rather than to distinguish between conception and birth, which was the formal reference.

Leaving, then, the question of the Definition not being made before, it may be more pertinent to inquire why it should occur particularly in our own age, and what the ripeness of the harvest might mean in the middle of the nineteenth century. Was it merely that God allows the spiritual as the physical laws of His creating, the laws of mind as those of matter, to work their issue in their own time; as the coral grows into an island, or as the landslip unforeseen matures and falls? Or was there some particular providence involved for our age or for that succeeding? Or does the unimpeded natural working still bear relation to the beneficent design of the whole (Rom. viii. 28)?

The future of the Definition.

The divine purpose in Mary's exaltation in the past has unmistakeably been to safeguard the faith in the Son of God, who of her became Man. When St. John wrote against the heresy of his day and declared that 'Jesus Christ was come in the flesh,' it introduced of necessity the unique glory of Mary—*incarnatus est ex Maria Virgine.* At Ephesus the sequelae of Arianism were expelled by the mere name of the Mother of God. In our time Mary is declared sinless from

her conception, and the faith of Nicaea is further defended. Because there is no longer, with that decision, any possibility of imagining her Son to be but the holiest of humankind; as the late Protestant Dean Stanley said, 'first'—with Sakya Muni second![1] The place of the sinless human being is seen to be already occupied. The Captain of our salvation must be more than that, and He can only be more as being 'the true God and Eternal Life' (1 John v. 20; cp. John xiv. 6).

But the immediate result must be and was to bring our Lady into more conspicuous view, and devotion to her has blossomed since in many forms and fashions. In our country a signal example has been the renewal of the dedication of England to the Mother of God. How is this enlargement of court and homage to Mary everywhere to subserve the divine purpose? It is possible that in the near future the Church is to make some large advance and to undertake a task of heavier burden, in which the aid of her most powerful Protectress will be indispensable. For we are but feeble creatures, even Popes and Cardinals, and stand in hourly need of wiser counsel and protection, if we are to avoid blundering and escape disaster; and with every advance-

[1] Some one praised in his hearing the lofty morality of the Indian hierophant, and Stanley, with an upward glance, murmured: 'He was second.'

ment made within the kingdom of God the malice and energy of our spiritual foes, creatures so much stronger and more subtle than we, is stimulated to fresh assault. Can we look around us and say, with the two sons of Zebedee: 'We are able'? But any new enterprise and responsibility, whatever its character and scope, may be safely undertaken under the patronage of Mary the Help of Christians. And if Mary were invoked by all and several, on every ocean and in every clime, in the hour of the dawning triumph, invoked through her latest exaltation and its unanimous acclaim: 'I am the Immaculate Conception'!

But there is possible a far other issue. We witness in our generation, outside the Church, the confusion and catastrophe of religious faith altogether. Christianity subsides, and with it goes all belief in God, all prayer and worship. The proclamation of the Christian jubilee was that 'to the poor the Gospel is preached,' and the poor no longer hear it. Our Lord bade us suffer the little children to come to Him, and this is now everywhere to be stopped. We live lives of little comfort and dwindle and die, and our hope of immortality is but a reminiscence of ideas that have passed away. There is organised confederation and active propaganda to demolish Christianity first and to abolish God after. There

is class hatred and low greed and social and political revolution, triumphant in some countries of Europe and growing to a head in others. With the revolution comes inevitably moral corruption and rebellion against all restraint; moral order is represented by the Church, and therefore again there is war upon her: *le cléricalisme voilà l'ennemi.*

Where is it to end, whether the assault from without or the unbelief that opens the gates? The Church trembled with the shock of the Protestant revolt in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; how will she bear the invasion of the new Protestantism, critical, antinomian, materialistic, in the twentieth? Who will escape the insuck of the vortex, what rank, what class, what order in the world? Is it history, is it human nature, that the ranks of the clergy, from the lowest to the highest grade, are exempt from a revolt which is spiritual and material both at once? A prophetic vision might behold the rising flood even surge around the rock on which the Church is built. The sanctuary is invaded, and judgment, if its day has come, must begin at the house of God (1 Petr. iv. 17). Suppose that culmination reached, liberalism in College and Congregation; there is now an added bulwark. The beginning and the end of all, Jesus Christ the self-same for

ever, God of the substance of His Father begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance of His Mother born in the world, the First-born from the dead, the Corner-stone of the Revelation, the Stone that was made Head of the corner, is still more impregnable to displace, as explained above, when His Mother is declared sinless in the Christian creed. That declaration is firmly grounded, beyond likelihood of rescinding. It was Papal, if such be demanded; it was Catholic—not merely accepted, but promoted and carried, by the universal Church. Consider the case on natural grounds, from a merely human point of view. There is no human institution that will commit open-eyed suicide, and the Church would do that in abrogating the dogma of 1854. Papal and Catholic, if that decision cannot stand, what other had ever better title? If that be abrogated, the magisterium of the Church, as custodian of the Revelation, as universal Teacher, comes to an end. The consequence is apparent, and thus the deed could never be done. On natural grounds, observe, and from a merely human point of view. But the Church is not a human institution but divine, and this simple safeguard has been given her from above, that according to the promise the gates of hell may not prevail against her. Christ is the Word of God, to be

adored, and it can never be gainsayed, because Mary Immaculate has already attained the supreme height of humanity. And Christ is Christianity. This is the provision made by God Himself, simple and sublime, like the bursting of the leaf and the fructification of the seed; possibly against a day of disaster and of doubt, when His enemies shall triumph again, as they triumphed in the age of Julian the Apostate and under the rule of Robespierre; when the dragon shall make war upon the remnant of the seed of the woman (Apoc. xii. 17), the children of Mary. In that day where shall England be found, that once was Mary's Dowry? The blood of her martyred Saints, from Thomas Beket to Thomas More, cries aloud, the pardoning Blood of Jesus pleads for her. Haply ere that time, through the mercy of God, my countrymen too will have found the young Child 'with Mary His Mother,' and have offered Him their gold and themselves.

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